

THOSE OF US WHO HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF ASSEMBLING HERE THIS WEEK MARK THE THIRTY-FIFTH TIME THAT MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS ASSOCIATION HAVE MET IN ANNUAL CONFERENCE. I USE THE WORD "PRIVILEGE" BECAUSE WE ARE FREE TO MEET, WE ARE FREE TO DECIDE FOR OURSELVES WHAT WE SHALL SAY, DO, AND HEAR THIS WEEK, AND WE ARE FREE TO TAKE ACTION WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF ATHLETIC HEALTH CARE AND TO THE FUTURE OF OUR PROFESSION, OUR ASSOCIATION, AND THE VERY SOCIETY IN WHICH WE LIVE.

THIS WEEK IS AN OCCASION FOR MANY THINGS: WE HAVE COME HERE TO SHARE AND TO GAIN NEW KNOWLEDGE, TO EXCHANGE IDEAS, TO MAKE DECISIONS AND TAKE ACTIONS, TO VISIT WITH FRIENDS, AND TO RENEW OUR VIGOR AND DEDICATION. LIKE THE ANNUAL JOURNEY UPSTREAM FOR THE SALMON, THIS TRIP IS NECESSARY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OUR SPECIES, AND WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT.

TODAY, I HAVE A GREATER PRIVILEGE, THAT OF ADDRESSING THIS ASSEMBLY. I HAVE CHOSEN AS MY THEME, "THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE", FOR THIS ASSOCIATION HAS HAD ONLY ONE GOAL - TO BE THE VERY BEST THAT WE CAN BE.

I WILL NOT ATTEMPT A HISTORY TODAY AS MIKE O'SHEA, NATA'S HISTORIAN, HAS WRITTEN A SUPERB HISTORY THAT I URGE ALL OF YOU TO READ, AND THERE ARE OTHERS WHO LIVED IT AND MADE THE HISTORY WHO ARE EMINENTLY MORE QUALIFIED THAN I.

I DO HAVE SOME COMMENTS TO MAKE ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION AND THE PROFESSION, THE PROBLEMS THAT WERE FACED, AND THE MEASURES THAT WERE TAKEN TO SOLVE THEM. THE YEARS CAN BE DIVIDED READILY INTO THE ORGANIZING YEARS OF THE FIFTIES, THE YEARS OF STRIVING FOR CREDIBILITY OF THE SIXTIES, THE YEARS OF FIGHTING FOR ACCREDITATION OF THE SEVENTIES, AND THE TREMENDOUS GROWTH YEARS OF THE EIGHTIES.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS THAT I HAVE CHOSEN TO PROVIDE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ARE HIGHLIGHTS AS I'VE PERCEIVED THEM.

A VERY WISE WOMAN ONCE SAID, "THE EASY PATH IN THE LOWLAND HAS NOTHING OF GRAND OR NEW: BUT A TOILSOME ASCENT LEADS ON TO A GLORIOUS VIEW." ALTHOUGH THESE WORDS WERE GIVEN IN THE OPENING ADDRESS TO ANOTHER ASSOCIATION, MANY YEARS AGO, THEY WOULD STILL SERVE THE PATTERN AS THE BEST ARGUMENT EVER GIVEN IN BEHALF OF WORK.

TO A SMALL GROUP OF MEN MEETING TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN KANSAS CITY, ON JUNE 24, 1950, THE LONG TOILSOME ASCENT LAY AHEAD. THE PURPOSE OF THAT FIRST MEETING WAS TO FORM AN ASSOCIATION AND TO UNITE UNDER ONE LEADERSHIP ALL OF THE AREA ASSOCIATIONS THAT HAD FORMED THE YEAR BEFORE.

FIRST OF ALL, IT WAS NOT AN EASY TASK TO BRING TOGETHER MEN KNOWN, IN MANY CASES, ONLY BY REPUTATION; SECONDLY, THERE WERE VARIED STANDARDS OF EDUCATION AND OF TECHNIQUES. IT IS TO THE CREDIT OF THESE MEN THAT THE PRIMARY CONCERN WOULD BE NOT ONLY TO RAISE THE STANDARDS OF THE ASSOCIATION, BUT OF THE ENTIRE PROFESSION. THE PROCLAIMED PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION WAS TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN THE PROFESSION OF ATHLETIC TRAINING THROUGH THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, KNOWLEDGE, AND METHODS OF ATHLETIC TRAINING.

ONE OF OUR EARLIEST CONCERNS FOR OUR PROFESSION WAS THAT MEMBERS MUST SHARE WITH EACH OTHER THEIR EXPERIENCES, THEIR NEEDS, THEIR DIFFICULTIES AND THEIR OPINIONS.

TODAY, WE MUST, MOST IMPORTANTLY, I BELIEVE, STAY TUNED TO EACH OTHER - WE MUST HEAR AND UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER. WE MUST GIVE TO EACH OTHER AND TAKE FROM EACH OTHER.

THEN, AS NOW, THERE WERE FRIENDS IN THE RANKS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, MANY YEARS AGO, IT WAS APPARENT THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS WERE IN FACT PRACTICING MEDICINE. THIS WAS UNDESIRABLE, OF COURSE, AND CAUSED THE MEDICAL PROFESSION TO START TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ACTIVITIES OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS. IT WAS NOT UNTIL AFTER WORLD WAR II THAT THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION TOOK RECOGNITION OF ATHLETICS AND ESTABLISHED A SECTION ON SPORTS MEDICINE.

WITHOUT OUR FRIENDS OF MEDICINE, THE NATA MIGHT NEVER HAVE ACHIEVED THE STATURE OF CREDIBILITY WE ENJOY TODAY. TODAY - THOUSANDS OF PHYSICIANS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES ARE WORKING IN CLOSEST COOPERATION WITH US. WITH THE FORMATION OF THE AMA'S COMMITTEE ON THE MEDICAL ASPECTS OF SPORTS, SPORTS MEDICINE WAS TAKEN TO THE GRASS ROOTS IN THE 1950'S. WE OWE MUCH TO THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS, AND WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO THE AMERICAN ORTHOPAEDIC SOCIETY FOR SPORTS MEDICINE, WHO HAVE DONE MORE TO PROMOTE AND ADVANCE THE ATHLETIC TRAINER THAN ANY OTHER GROUP. THEY HAVE AS THEIR THEME, ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE QUALITY OF SPORTS MEDICINE'S ACTIONS, AND THROUGH ITS COMMITTEES IS NOW AN ACTIVE INFLUENCE ON THE QUALITY OF SPORTS MEDICINE ACROSS THE NATION. THIS SOCIETY RESPECTS THE VITAL ROLE OF THE QUALITY ATHLETIC TRAINER AND GIVES THE TRAINER A BETTER ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO FUNCTION.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTION OF THE FIFTIES, IN MY OPINION, WAS THE ADOPTION OF OUR CODE OF ETHICS. THIS WAS LATER REVISED IN 1972, BUT THIS ACTION MADE THE ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBLE. A PROFESSIONAL CODE OF ETHICS IS, IN A NUTSHELL, A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THE EXPECTED BEHAVIOR OF ANY MEMBER OF THAT PROFESSION. OUR CODE OF ETHICS, THEREFORE, WAS DESCRIPTIVE OF BEHAVIOR WE WOULD COMMEND TO ALL ATHLETIC TRAINERS, WHETHER THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OR NOT.

OF COURSE, ONLY NATA MEMBERS ARE BOUND BY THE CODE. THAT IS AN AGREEMENT WE MAKE WHEN WE JOIN, BUT WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC AND TO OUR PROFESSION TO ENSURE THAT OUR CODE OF ETHICS IS TRULY REPRESENTATIVE. THE ASSOCIATION, AS RECOGNIZED SPOKESMEN FOR AN ENTIRE PROFESSION, HAS A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO TRULY REPRESENT THAT PROFESSION.

AT THE TENTH ANNUAL MEETING IN 1959, THERE WAS A COMMITTEE CHANGE THAT WAS TO HAVE FAR REACHING INFLUENCE ON THE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF THE ATHLETIC TRAINER. THE COMMITTEE ON GAINING RECOGNITION BECAME THE COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT. AT THIS MEETING, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ADOPTED AND APPROVED THE ATHLETIC TRAINING PROGRAM PRESENTED TO THEM BY THE COMMITTEE THAT INCLUDED A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM ON EDUCATION.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, SPEAKING AS AN IRISHMAN, SUMMED UP AN APPROACH TO LIFE: "OTHER PEOPLES", HE SAID, "SEE THINGS AND SAY, 'WHY?' BUT I DREAM THINGS THAT NEVER WERE - AND I SAY 'WHY NOT?'"

IT IS THAT QUALITY OF THE IRISH, THE REMARKABLE COMBININATION OF HOPE, CONFIDENCE AND IMAGINATION, THAT IS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER TODAY. THE PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD CANNOT POSSIBLY BE SOLVED BY SKEPTICS OR CYNICS WHOSE HORIZONS ARE LIMITED BY THE OBVIOUS REALITIES. WE NEED MEN WHO CAN DREAM OF THINGS THAT NEVER WERE, AND ASK, WHY NOT?

THESE WERE THE KINDS OF MEN WHO WERE ON THIS COMMITTEE. TWO OF THESE MEN WERE VERY SPECIAL TO ME; BUD MILLER BECAME THE FATHER OF ATHLETIC TRAINING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION, AND LINDSY MC LEAN BROUGHT INTO BEING, WITH THE PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION SERVICE, NATA'S CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES. AS I RECALL OUR MEETINGS - EVERYTIME I WOULD SAY SOMETHING COULDN'T BE DONE - BOTH OF THOSE GUYS SEEMINGLY IN UNISON WOULD SAY, "WHY NOT?".

CERTIFICATION OF THE ATHLETIC TRAINER HAS NOW BEEN ACCEPTED ON THE SAME LEVEL AS CERTIFICATION IN ANY COMPARABLE PROFESSION. IN 1968, THE AMA'S HOUSE OF DELEGATES FORMALLY RECOGNIZED THE STANDARDS OF THE NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND CERTIFICATION, AND ENCOURAGED ITS MEMBERS TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NATA TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE STANDARDS. THE ATHLETIC TRAINER ALSO HAS THE SUPPORT OF HIGHER EDUCATION. BY 1970, THE FIRST FOUR COLLEGIATE PROGRAMS WERE FUNCTIONING IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE NEW CURRICULAR STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR NATA APPROVAL. TODAY, OVER 70 APPROVED PROGRAMS ARE FUNCTIONING, AND THE APPROVAL PROCEDURES OF THE NATA HAVE BECOME WELL ESTABLISHED, AS HAVE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION.

WE LOOK TO MEDICINE FOR MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY FOR THE KNOWLEDGE WHICH IS BOTH PECULIAR TO THE VARIOUS MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SPECIALTIES AND RELEVANT TO THE ATHLETE'S PROBLEMS WHICH ATHLETIC TRAINERS ARE LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER. WE ALSO LOOK WITH SIMILAR HIGH REGARD TO THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OTHERS OUTSIDE MEDICINE, AND, OF COURSE, WE LOOK TO THE ATHLETIC TRAINERS THEMSELVES FOR THE LARGEST AND MOST ESSENTIAL PORTION OF THE CURRICULUM.

IN 1968, A NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY WAS APPOINTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO ACT ON AN INTERIM BASIS WHILE AN AD HOC COMMITTEE SEARCHED AND SCREENED APPLICANTS FOR THE POSITION. IT HAD BECOME APPARENT THAT THE ORIGINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION, ALTHOUGH BASICALLY SOUND, BECAME FUNCTIONALLY OUTDATED AND IMPRACTICAL. IT SEEMED IMPERATIVE THAT THERE BE A CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE IN AN EFFORT TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS STILL COMPATIBLE WITH FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

AFTER TWO YEARS OF STUDY, REFINEMENT, AND MODIFICATION OF A PROPOSED PLAN OF ORGANIZATION, THE ASSOCIATION IN 1970, MADE A MAJOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE BY ACCEPTING THE MOST EXTENSIVE STRUCTURAL REORGANIZATION SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1950. THIS WAS DESIGNED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ONE CENTRAL IDEA: TO INSURE THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CONTINUAL ADVANCEMENT, IMPROVED SERVICE, AND NEW PROJECTS FOR THE PRESENT AND FUTURE. THE PLAN WAS STRUCTURED TO HAVE OFFICERS, DIVISION DIRECTORS, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND DISTRICT SECRETARIES.

OTHO DAVIS OF DUKE UNIVERSITY WAS ELECTED TO THE POSITION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NATA ON JANUARY 11, 1971. BY NOVEMBER, THE MEMBERSHIP CENSUS SHOWED A RECORD OF 1,989 MEMBERS, 802 OF WHOM WERE CERTIFIED.

SINCE THEN, THE ASSOCIATION HAS HAD A PHENOMENAL GROWTH WITH CONTINUED ADVANCEMENT AND SERVICE TO THE MEMBERSHIP. THE 1970'S MAY BE CHARACTERIZED AS YEARS OF ACTION. SOME OF IT RATHER PRECIPITOUS, BUT ACTION NEVERTHELESS. BY 1972, THE NATA HAD A REVISED CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AND A REVISED CURRICULUM FOR AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR ATHLETIC TRAINERS. IT WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING AN ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WITH APPROVED CURRICULUM IN ATHLETIC TRAINING. THERE WAS A REALIGNMENT OF THE TEN DISTRICTS AND THE CODE OF ETHICS WAS REVISED.

ALSO IN 1972, THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES BECAME QUITE ACTIVE IN LEGISLATION THAT CAUSED GRAVE CONCERN IN THE SPORTS WORLD. CONGRESSMAN DELLUMS INTRODUCED THE ATHLETIC CARE ACT. IN ESSENCE, THE LEGISLATION AMENDED TWO EXISTING PIECES OF FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION LEGISLATION, THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ACT OF 1965, AND THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT. THE AMENDMENT WOULD HAVE PROVIDED THAT ALL SCHOOLS WHICH ARE ENGAGED IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC COMPETITION MUST EMPLOY A CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINER AND THIS WAS NOT FEASIBLE. THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

ACT (OSHA) WAS REVISED TO INCLUDE THE ATHLETIC SAFETY ACT OF 1973, AND THE NATIONAL AMATEUR SPORTS FOUNDATION BILL OR FEDERAL SCHOLASTIC AND AMATEUR SPORTS ACT OF 1973. CONGRESS WAS GETTING INTO SPORTS BECAUSE IT WAS POPULAR.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE WAS MAKING OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUBSTANTIATION OF PROFESSIONALISM OF THE ATHLETIC TRAINER. THE BASIC GOALS OF OUR PROFESSION ARE THE SAME ONES THAT WE HAVE HAD FROM THE BEGINNING. THEY WERE APPROPRIATE THEN AND ARE APPROPRIATE NOW: *That* WE WILL DELIVER THE HIGHEST QUALITY CARE POSSIBLE TO THE INSTITUTION OR ORGANIZATION WE SERVE: *and* WE WILL SEE THAT OUR PROFESSION IS RECOGNIZED AS QUALIFIED, EDUCATED, TRAINED, AND COMPETENT. WE WANT THE NATION TO KNOW THAT WE DESERVE THIS TRUST. OUR TWO BASIC GOALS, THEREFORE, ARE SERVICE AND RECOGNITION - IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE.

THE ASSOCIATION HAS STRUGGLED LONG AND HARD TO ESTABLISH ITS ROLE IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR ATHLETIC TRAINING EDUCATION. WE HAVE PERHAPS, PUT A LITTLE TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT ALL THIS FOR THE ASSOCIATION AND ITS MEMBERS. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE TAKE A WIDER VIEW AND CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THAT OUR ROLE IN THE ACCREDITING OF ATHLETIC TRAINING EDUCATION PROGRAMS, IS INDEED IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

PROFESSIONALISM IS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON THAT CHARACTERISTICALLY SETS OUR MODERN SOCIETY APART FROM EARLIER SOCIETIES. IT IS A PROCESS THAT SEEKS TO CLOTHE A GIVEN AREA WITH STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE, RULES OF CONDUCT, A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, CRITERIA FOR RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING, *then should be* A MEASURE OF PROTECTION FOR MEMBERS, COLLECTIVE CONTROL OVER THE AREA, AND A POSITION OF DIGNITY AND SOCIAL STANDING IN SOCIETY. THE PROFESSIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINER IS AND HAS BEEN STRIVING TO ADDRESS ALL OF THESE FACTORS. POSSIBLY, HOWEVER, OUR CONFLICTS OF TODAY ARE IN PART A CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS

EFFORT ON THE PART OF CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY TO PLACE RESTRAINTS ON THE CONTINUED PROFESSIONALIZATION OF ATHLETIC TRAINING.

ONE YEAR AGO, THE ASSOCIATION'S SUCCESS IN GAINING RECOGNITION AS AN ACCREDITING AGENCY WAS REPORTED. THIS FURTHER INDICATED A COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF THE ASSOCIATION TO AN ACCREDITATION PROGRAM THAT REFLECTED THE QUALITY EDUCATION THAT WE ESPOUSE. I ASK THAT YOU ACCEPT THE ACCREDITATION RESPONSIBILITY WITH SENSITIVITY, FLEXIBILITY, AND STRENGTH WITHOUT ARROGANCE.

AS WE RECOGNIZE THE EXPANSION OF OUR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE, WE MUST PLACE HIGHER PRIORITY ON DEFINING WHAT WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO THAT DIFFERENTIATES OUR PROFESSION FROM OTHERS.

DURING THE 1960'S, THE ASSOCIATION HAD MADE SOME PROGRESS IN PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES WERE BEING SUGGESTED. THE ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS WERE BEING ESTABLISHED. ANNUALLY, MANY GRADUATING YOUNG TRAINERS OF EXCEPTIONAL POTENTIAL WERE DENIED OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT BECAUSE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS WERE GOING UNRECOGNIZED.

EDUCATION ALWAYS IS ONE OF THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS TO BE ANALYZED AS ANY PROFESSION ATTEMPTS TO ADVANCE. THIS CERTAINLY WAS TRUE IN THE FIELD OF ATHLETIC TRAINING. CERTIFICATION IN PHYSICAL THERAPY HAD MANY ADVANTAGES, BUT IT HAD BECOME OBVIOUS THAT IT WAS NOT A REALISTIC OR PERHAPS DESIRABLE GOAL FOR ALL TRAINERS TO PURSUE. A MASTERS DEGREE LIKEWISE APPEALED TO MANY, BUT NOT TO ALL MEMBERS OF SUCH A HIGHLY DIVERSIFIED PROFESSION. TO ADEQUATELY PREPARE TRAINERS FOR TEACHING POSITIONS ON THE SECONDARY AND COLLEGIATE LEVEL AS WELL AS SPECIALIZED POSITIONS ON THE UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL LEVELS, FLEXIBILITY IN EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES MUST ALWAYS BE RECOGNIZED AND ENCOURAGED. THE VALUE OF APPRENTICESHIP AS AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE HAD BEEN RECOGNIZED,

AND IT WAS PERHAPS THE ONE EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE ALL TRAINERS APPROVED AND RECOMMENDED.

THERE HAD BEEN MUCH DISCUSSION OF A POSSIBLE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION FOR THE NATA. WITH SUCH AN EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE, THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT TRAINER COULD PLAN HIS ACADEMIC CURRICULUM WITH THE AID OF HIS UNDERGRADUATE ADVISOR (AND HEAD ATHLETIC TRAINER) IN SUCH A MANNER THAT HE OR SHE COULD TAKE SUCH AN EXAMINATION WITH CONFIDENCE UPON GRADUATION.

IT WAS TRULY A MARVELOUS EXPERIENCE TO WATCH THE WORK OF LINDSY McLEAN AND HIS COMMITTEE ON CERTIFICATION DEVELOP THE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION AND PROCEDURES, FOR THE NATA. THE BOARD OF CERTIFICATION, MADE UP OF SIX ATHLETIC TRAINERS AND TWO MEDICAL DOCTORS, STARTED "GRANDFATHERING" THE ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP IN 1965, AND GAVE THE FIRST WRITTEN, PRACTICAL, AND ORAL EXAMINATION TO FOURTEEN CANDIDATES IN WACO, TEXAS, JULY 30, 1970. THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM HAS MET WITH OUTSTANDING SUCCESS IN ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL BY THE EDUCATIONAL, MEDICAL, AND SPORTS COMMUNITIES.

LAST YEAR, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION OF PAUL GRACE, THE PROFESSION, THROUGH THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, HAS EARNED FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HEALTH CERTIFYING AGENCIES, FOR THE PROCESS USED TO EVALUATE AND CERTIFY FUTURE ATHLETIC TRAINERS. THIS WILL HELP TO ASSURE CONSUMER SAFETY BY QUALITY CONTROL WITH RESPECT TO CREDENTIALING OF INDIVIDUALS. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF EXPERTISE IN BOTH ATHLETIC TRAINING AND EDUCATION, IT IS MY OPINION THAT THE NATA IS BEST EQUIPPED TO ACCREDIT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND TO CERTIFY QUALIFICATION IN ATHLETIC TRAINING.

THE BASIC EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION OF THE ATHLETIC TRAINER MUST PREPARE HIM OR HER FOR A VARIETY OF RESPONSIBILITIES HE OR SHE WILL FACE IN HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER. THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS WITH WHICH THE NEW GRADUATE

SHOULD NOW BE EQUIPPED GO CONSIDERABLY BEYOND THOSE REQUIRED FOR THE DIRECT HEALTH CARE OF THE ATHLETE.

THE 1980'S ARE HARD TO CHARACTERIZE - THERE HAVE BEEN ACTIONS OF IMPORTANCE - FOR IT IS THE YEARS OF GROWTH - THERE WILL BE MANY UNFILLED INTENTIONS AND BEGINNINGS OF FRUSTRATIONS AND DISENCHANTMENT IN THESE YEARS I'M AFRAID. OUR SOCIETY'S INVOLVEMENT WITH LIABILITY AND WITH PRODUCT LIABILITY HAS MADE A JUMP OF A MAGNITUDE INCONCEIVABLE AS RECENTLY AS TEN YEARS AGO. LIFE BY LITIGATION HAS IMPACTED IN SPORTS MEDICINE. IT HAS IMPACTED ON THE SCHOOL SCENE, NOT ONLY AS IT PERTAINS TO THE PHYSICIAN AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE INJURED, BUT AS IT PERTAINS TO HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THOSE WHO ALSO SERVE IN PARAMEDICAL ROLES. IT IMPACTS ON THE ATHLETE, BUT ALSO INVOLVES THE EXCITED SPECTATOR WHO MIGHT SUFFER A HEART ATTACK AS THE GAME APPROACHES A FOURTH QUARTER TURNING POINT. IT IMPACTS ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATION TO ASSURE ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE FOR THE ATHLETES AND AGAIN FOR THOSE SPECTATORS WHO CHOOSE TO UTILIZE THE FACILITIES AT THE SCHOOL.

COMMENSURATE WITH THIS WE HAVE SEEN THE RISE IN THE APPRECIATION FOR THE NEED OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS. THIS HAS OCCURRED FROM TWO CHANGES IN THE SPORTS WORLD, NOT THROUGH THE DOING OF TRAINERS, BUT BECAUSE OF ANCILLARY OCCURANCES:

1. INCREASED FEAR BY THE PHYSICIAN IN BECOMING CLOSELY INVOLVED WITH SPORTS ACTIVITY BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL FOR LITIGATION;
2. A DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PHYSICIANS IN THE RURAL AREAS WHO ARE AVAILABLE.

IN PRIOR TIMES, THESE ACTIVITIES COULD SERVE AS DONATED SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY, BUT NOW MUST BE COVERED BY ALL SORTS OF LEGAL PROTECTION, INCLUDING SPECIFIC AND SPECIAL CONSENTS FROM THE PARENTS OF THE ATHLETES, SPECIFIC AND SPECIAL PRESEASON EVALUATIONS AND REPORTS, SPECIFIC AND SPECIAL

ATTENTION TO DETAILS AND TO THE EDUCATION OF THE STUDENT ATHLETE AND HIS/HER PARENTS LEST LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY ON THE PART OF THE PHYSICIAN AND THE ADMINISTRATION BE CHARGED SHOULD AN INJURY OCCUR TO A PARTICIPANT.

AS WE HAVE MOVED WITH THE ADVENT OF WOMEN'S ATHLETICS, THERE HAVE BEEN INCREASED DIFFICULTIES WITHIN THIS AREA CONCERNING THE DISPENSING OF INFORMATION AS WELL AS THE NEED FOR INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF PHYSICIANS AND PARAMEDICAL CARE.

AS THE TRAINERS HAVE TRIED TO INCREASE IN NUMBERS TO FIT INTO THIS OVERALL PICTURE, THEY HAVE TRIED TO ACT MOST RESPONSIBLY BY TRYING TO INCREASE LICENSURE, CERTIFICATION, AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION. BUT THEY HAVE NOW BEEN MET WITH THE FACT THAT BY THE VERY ACT OF INCREASING AND CERTIFYING THEIR HIGHER LEVEL OF CAPABILITY, THEY MAY IN FACT ASSUME A GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPER DISSEMINATION OF THIS INFORMATION IN THE EYES OF THE LEGAL WORLD. HENCE, THEY LEAVE THEMSELVES OPEN TO GREATER POTENTIAL FOR LITIGATION AS COMPARED TO THE DAYS WHEN WE WERE LESS STRUCTURED AND LIFE WAS MORE SIMPLE.

OUR MANDATE FOR A MAJOR PROGRAM IN 1986, CLEARLY STATES THAT OUR PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS NO LONGER ADEQUATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PROFESSION OR OF SOCIETY; IT DEMANDS CHANGE. CHANGE IS A PROCESS, AND BY THE TIME IT CAN BE DEMANDED OPENLY BY THOSE WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THAT PROCESS, CHANGE IS WELL UNDERWAY.

MUCH RESPONSIBILITY AND HARD WORK WILL FALL UPON OUR PROGRAM DIRECTORS AND OUR FACULTIES. THEY WILL HAVE TO BE ABLE TO CONVINCING THE DECISION-MAKING BODIES OF OUR ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS THAT CHANGE IS NECESSARY, FEASIBLE, AND IS WELL UNDERWAY. PROGRAM DIRECTORS WILL FACE OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGING ENCOUNTERS. THESE, HOWEVER, SHOULD HELP STRENGTHEN OUR DECISION FOR CHANGE AND HELP CLARIFY OUR OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES.

THIS WILL BENEFIT OUR STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS MUST HAVE TIME TO LEARN ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF GOOD AND BAD DECISIONS. THEY NEED TIME TO EXPLORE WHETHER THEY REALLY KNOW WHAT THEY THINK THEY KNOW, AND THEY NEED TIME TO LEARN HOW TO RESPOND TO GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE IN A CREATIVE MANNER. GIVEN THAT TIME, STUDENTS WILL BECOME DECISION-MAKING PROFESSIONALS, COMFORTABLE IN THAT ROLE, AND WILL BE UP FRONT IN THEIR CAREER.

AT THE PRESENT TIME, THERE ARE MORE THAN TWENTY STATES WITH SOME FORM OF STATE REGULATION OR LICENSURE FOR ATHLETIC TRAINING, AND ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION DOES NOT TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, IT IS MOST SUPPORTIVE OF THOSE THAT SEEK STATE REGULATION.

WE SHOULD ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND THAT THE STANDARDS WE ADVOCATE, DEVELOP, AND TRANSLATE INTO AN EXAMINATION FOR LICENSURE FOR PERSONS ENTERING THE PRACTICE MUST BE REALISTIC. THEY MUST BE THOROUGH AND COMPREHENSIVE AND AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL, BUT THAT LEVEL SHOULD NEVER BE EXCESSIVE AND UNNECESSARY. WE MUST GUARD AGAINST USE OF THE LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS AS A PROTECTION FOR THE LICENTIATE AND CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE ITS VALUE AS A PROTECTION FOR THE PUBLIC.

AS WE MOVE INTO LICENSING OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS, IT HAS BECOME APPARENT THAT NOT ALL ATHLETIC TRAINERS HAVE ACHIEVED THE SAME LEVEL OF COMPETENCY. THERE IS JUSTIFICATION FOR ASSISTING ALL ATHLETIC TRAINERS TO HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES IN ACHIEVING THE MINIMAL LEVEL OF COMPETENCY. THE NATA HAS OTHER PROGRAMS SUCH AS FACULTY TRAINER EDUCATION PROGRAM WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO RETRAIN EXISTING FACULTY. IT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY TESTED IN THE CHICAGO AREA, WEST VIRGINIA, AND NORTH CAROLINA, AND HAS WIDE APPLICATION TO ANY REGION OR STATE WHICH CHOOSES TO UNDERTAKE SUCH A PROJECT. IT IS A THREE TO FIVE YEAR PLAN TO PROVIDE A LARGE NUMBER OF CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS IN A MINIMUM OF TIME. IT IS MY OPINION THAT IN THOSE STATES WHERE THIS PROGRAM

HAS BEEN MANDATED BY STATE LEGISLATURE, THEIR GRADUATES SHOULD NOT BE DENIED NATA CERTIFICATION PROCESS OR APPROVAL.

DIRECTION FOR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS HAS BEEN UPGRADED AND STRENGTHENED WITH A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF APPRENTICES PASSING THE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LICENSURE OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS, IMPROVED MEDICAL SPORTS CARE TO ATHLETES, AND NATIONAL FITNESS AND HEALTH ARE CLOSELY INTERWOVEN SUBJECTS. LICENSURE OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS WOULD INSURE THE PRACTICE OF HIGH LEVEL SPORTS MEDICINE THROUGHOUT OUR ATHLETIC COMMUNITIES.

I BELIEVE THAT WE AS A PROFESSION ARE BEING NAIVE IN NOT RECOGNIZING THAT SPECIALIZATION IS HERE. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ATHLETIC TRAINING AND PHYSICAL THERAPY WORK TOGETHER TO COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER, BOTH IN PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND IN THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE. THERE IS SO MUCH BOTH PROFESSIONS CAN LEARN AND SHARE WITH EACH OTHER, WITH THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL, AND WITH ATHLETES IN PARTICULAR AS THE BENEFICIARIES. I THINK OUR PROFESSION SHOULD ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE APTA'S SPORTS MEDICINE SECTIONS' SPECIALIZATION BECAUSE THAT WILL TAKE CARE OF THE CLINICIANS AND BY SUPPORTING IT, WE WILL FURTHER DEFINE OUR OWN SITUATION. WE HAVE FOUGHT HARD FOR QUALIFICATION; IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE QUALIFY OURSELVES FOR ANY POSITION OR CAREER WE WISH TO PURSUE.

MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE IF WE ARE TO MAKE THE ASSOCIATION AN ORGANIZATION WHICH IS BOTH MAXIMALLY DEMOCRATIC AND MAXIMALLY EFFECTIVE; THAT IS, BOTH SENSITIVE TO THE WISHES OF THE MEMBERSHIP AND ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS..

AS WE LOOK AT OURSELVES AS A PROFESSION, WE MUST ASK IF WE ARE A TRULY UNIFIED GROUP, OR ARE WE A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS ONLY CONCERNED WITH ISSUES WHICH AFFECT OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL SPHERES OF INTEREST AND PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT? EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT WE ARE A SOMEWHAT FRAGMENTED GROUP, WE SEEM TO HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN RECOGNIZING THAT ANY ISSUE WHICH AFFECTS ONE

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP HAS A POTENTIAL IMPACT ON ALL OUR MEMBERS.

EVEN IF THE INEQUITIES IN MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS WERE ABOLISHED, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, NOT EVERY MEMBER WOULD BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN THE MAKING OF ALL DECISIONS. THAT IS PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE; THEREFORE, WE MUST LOOK TO THE ADEQUACY OF OUR INTERNAL DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURE.

THE ASSOCIATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS MAKES POLICY WHICH IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VOTING MEMBERSHIP. THEY ARE DISTRIBUTED GEOGRAPHICALLY BY DISTRICTS. WHILE WE MAY WONDER FROM TIME TO TIME HOW REPRESENTATIVE THE REPRESENTATION IS, THERE IS NO DENYING THAT THE MECHANISM FOR EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION IS AVAILABLE.

THROUGH THE INSTRUMENT OF YOUR ADMINISTRATION, THE PRESIDENT, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, THE JOURNAL, AND THE DISTRICTS OF NATA, WE CAN GIVE VOICE TO WHAT WE ARE AND WHAT WE CAN DO. OUR TASK IS TO DO WHAT WE SAY, TO DO IT WELL, AND TO PERFORM IN WAYS WHICH ARE BEYOND REPROACH. I INVITE EACH OF YOU PERSONALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY TO THAT TASK.

THE BOTTOM LINE OF EVERYTHING I'VE SAID THIS MORNING CAN BE SUMMED UP IN ONE WORD - RESPONSIBILITY. IT'S THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH GROWTH AND NUMBERS AND POWER.

WE HAVE CONTINUALLY SEARCHED FOR A BETTER TOMORROW, WE HAVE OFTEN FAILED TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR GAINS - FAILED TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT WE HAVE EXPERIENCED PHENOMENAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. AT TIMES, IT APPEARS AS THOUGH WE HAVE BEEN FEARFUL OF THE OUTCOME OF POSITIVE SELF-REFLECTION AND RECOGNITION, ACTIVITIES THAT I BELIEVE ARE IMPORTANT IF WE ARE TO APPROACH TOMORROW WITH A MORE APPROPRIATE BALANCE BETWEEN RECOGNIZED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PHILOSOPHY.

ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCES OF MY CAREER HAS BEEN THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ASSOCIATION GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE. AS OUR ASSOCIATION CONTINUED TO GROW AND MEET THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION, OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOGNIZED THE GREAT NEED FOR A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS OF ATHLETIC TRAINING WHICH WOULD RECOGNIZE OUTSTANDING YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN BY ASSISTING THEM WITH THEIR ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES. WITH THE AWARDING OF OUR FIRST SCHOLARSHIP AWARD IN 1971, AT BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, THE GROWTH OF THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM HAS STEADILY IMPROVED. THE ANNUAL PRESENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS TODAY REPRESENTS MUCH MORE THAN A LISTING OF NAMES. IT REPRESENTS THE CONTINUING FAITH THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS ASSOCIATION HAVE PLACED IN OUR CARE. THE HONOR ROLL HAS GROWN THIS YEAR, BOTH IN NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE GENEROUSLY MADE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THESE AWARDS AND IN THE AMOUNT OF DOLLARS THOSE INDIVIDUALS HAVE GIVEN.

AN OUTSTANDING GROUP OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN HAVE SHARED IN OVER \$100,000 IN AWARDS THROUGH THE YEARS. JOINING WITH NATA ARE THE GREATEST GROUP OF SPONSORS IN THE WHOLE WORLD, SUPERIOR TO THOSE OF ANY OTHER NATIONAL ASSOCIATION. THEY ARE DEDICATED, LOYAL, AND THEY BELIEVE IN US. THEY CERTAINLY DESERVE THE SINCERE THANKS OF OUR MEMBERSHIP.

STARTING IN 1975, WITH A GIFT OF \$500 BY OTHO DAVIS, THE ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN DEVELOPING AN EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENT FUND THAT HAS IMPROVED UNTIL IT IS NOW IN EXCESS OF \$100,000. SINCE 1978, THE ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN THE BENEFICIARY OF GRANTS FROM THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE CHARITIES THAT NOW TOTAL MORE THAN ^{42,500} \$35,000. FOR THIS WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR IT HAS BEEN AN INCENTIVE IN ATTRACTING ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. EACH OF YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE THAT THIS FUND CONTINUES TO GROW BY PROVIDING MORE OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH WHICH OTHERS CAN EXPRESS THEIR INTEREST IN NATA.

THOSE VISIONARY PEOPLE WHO STARTED AND NOURISHED THE ASSOCIATION, ALMOST THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, ASPIRED TO PLACING ATHLETIC TRAINING ON FIRM SCIENTIFIC FOOTING, ALONG WITH SERVICE AND EDUCATION. THE ASPIRATION HAS CONTINUED AND STILL STANDS AS ONE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION. ONCE WE ARE WELL ON THE WAY TO ACHIEVING THIS ASPIRATION, PERHAPS WE CAN STOP CALLING OURSELVES PROFESSIONAL AND START BEING PROFESSIONAL IN THE SENSE THAT OUR FOUNDERS ENVISIONED.

I COULD NOT CLOSE THIS PRESENTATION WITHOUT THANKING A ^{very} SPECIAL GROUP TODAY. I WOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THE MEMBERS OF THE ATHLETIC TRAINERS HALL OF FAME. I STAND IN AWE OF THEIR SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND LOYALTY TO ATHLETIC TRAINING. THEIR PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE HAS BEEN SUPERB.

ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS, THE CHANGES IN OUR ASSOCIATION IN THE FUTURE WILL BE NEITHER DRAMATIC OR SUDDEN. THEIR IMPACT WILL BE HISTORICAL, NOT CONTEMPORARY. THEY WILL COME IF WE EXERCISE THE KIND OF WISDOM, PROLONGED EFFORT, AND PATIENCE THAT GO WITH LOOKING AHEAD TO WHAT THE PROFESSION AND THE ASSOCIATION WILL BE TEN YEARS OR EVEN ANOTHER THIRTY-FIVE YEARS FROM NOW. WE MUST WORK DILIGENTLY AND HONESTLY FOR WHAT MANY OF US MAY NOT LIVE TO SEE. PERHAPS THIS IS ALL ANY MAN CAN REALLY MEAN WHEN HE SAYS: "I HAVE A DREAM ...".

EDWIN MARKHAM IN HIS "LEAVES OF GOLD", HAD THIS TO SAY, "GREAT IT IS TO BELIEVE THE DREAM, WHEN WE STAND IN YOUTH BY THE STARRY STREAM; BUT A GREATER THING IS TO FIGHT LIFE THROUGH AND SAY AT THE END, 'THE DREAM WAS TRUE'."