

The Value of Unintentional Leadership
Keynote Address
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It is truly an honor and a privilege to be with you today, even if it's virtually. I'm sorry I wasn't able to attend in person due to some other commitments here in Colorado – I would have loved to have been there in person with all of you today, and have a chance to visit Durham and the hospital again. Congratulations to all of you graduating residents for successfully competing what I hope and trust was a fantastic and memorable year at Duke University Hospital. A special shout-out to Ellen Boyle, a University of Colorado School of Pharmacy graduate. Poor Ellen was probably hoping she'd never have to listen to me on Zoom again and moved all the way across the country to make sure of it – sorry Ellen!

I'm so honored to have been selected for the Milton W. Skolaut Leadership Award this year. I look at the rich history of the Duke University Hospital, and the great leaders that you have had and continue to have here, and I look at the list of previous Skolaut Leadership Award winners -- and part of me thinks you definitely picked the wrong guy. I don't really think of myself as a leader in the same way that these previous Skolaut Award winners are leaders – I just think of myself as a person who has worked really hard, has done some reasonably good things along the way, and has taken advantage of a lot of the opportunities that have come to me. I don't have "imposter syndrome" as we refer to it these days, but I don't really think of myself as a leader or think I act however a leader is supposed to act – and perhaps that's actually why I've been fairly successful. Hold that thought – I'll return to it later in my remarks.

I absolutely loved my time at Duke and the year went by way too quickly. I was in the Residency Class of 1990, the 18th residency class, 33 years ago now. I've had lots of great experiences in my life, and my year at Duke University was certainly one of them. I hope you've used your time here to your fullest advantage, and will continue to put the great training, great experiences, great relationships, and great life-lessons you've gained to your full advantage moving forward in your careers and in your personal lives.

During my year at Duke I learned how to work harder, or at least more hours, than I had ever worked before. There was one month when I was on an ICU rotation, and working on a vancomycin research project, and working on my grand rounds presentation, that I logged well over 100 hours each week for several weeks in a row. (Clearly there were no ASHP Duty Hour standards at that time). I remember calculating that I worked for \$1.17 an hour that month. Now when people at work ask me how I'm doing and I give one of my standard answers of "Another day, another buck fifty", I feel like I'm doing pretty well for myself!

My year at Duke was marked by a lot of "firsts". It was the first time I ever used a word processor – prior to that everything was either hand-written or done on a type-writer. It was also the first time I put together presentation slides using a graphics program on a computer, a program called Harvard Graphics, several years before I ever heard of something called PowerPoint. Originally being from California, it was the first time I ever had my car frozen to the ground by a winter ice storm – the coating of ice over my car was so thick I couldn't even get into it for two days straight. It was the first time I attended an ASHP Summer Meeting, to see Duke's Director of Pharmacy be inducted as the ASHP President. It was the first time I learned that the word "MASH" had so many practical uses, as in "mashing" the button in the elevator or "mashing" a patient's belly during a physical exam. It was NOT

the first time I saw a good team play college basketball – I did my undergraduate training at UCLA – but to this day I’m still a die-hard Duke fan, which is not easy because (as Ellen might remember) I’m surrounded at work by lots of other faculty who have connections with UNC, Kansas or Kentucky. My first-ever speeding ticket was on Highway 501, not too far from here.

The year I spent at Duke as a pharmacy resident marked the high point of my personal coffee consumption. One of our required rotations was in the Drug Information Center in the old South Hospital (which I’m not sure is there anymore). During my DI rotation I would come in each morning and make a pot of coffee, then drink it mostly by myself. Then after lunch I would make another pot of coffee and drink most of that one by myself, too. Looking back on it I wonder how I could actually hold a pen to write – I was way beyond the point of getting any kind of cardiovascular benefit from my caffeine addiction.

My very first publication came from Duke: one of the first review articles ever written regarding the use of drugs like benzodiazepines, haloperidol, and phenobarbital for sedation in critically ill patients. By the way, that article was the result of a question I fielded during that DI rotation; my written response was so long and so comprehensive – probably because of all that coffee I drank -- that one of my preceptors encouraged me to reformat it and submit it for publication as a review article. That article was published in 1991 and was my first taste of publishing, and helped fuel my interest in academic pharmacy as a future career.

Drinking beer at a place called Col. Chutney’s in Chapel Hill before a Duke-UNC women’s soccer game, which Duke won (of course!); going jet-skiing for the first time and BBQing at Jordan Lake; moving from San Diego with it’s beautiful, perfect 70-degree weather to Durham, NC with its 90 degrees and 95% humidity. I moved to Durham in June and didn’t stop sweating until October! Definitely lots of new experiences for me, all of which contributed to a memorable year.

But the best thing about my time at Duke University Hospital was the people I met. There were four of us in that residency class; we didn’t all do a good job of staying in touch afterwards, but I have a lot of good memories of the times we spent together during that year and they were a very important support group for me.

The preceptor who introduced me to Harvard Graphics to make presentation slides was Byron May, a previous Skolaut Award winner. The Director of Pharmacy who was inducted as ASHP President during my residency year was Jim McAllister, also a Skolaut Award winner and a huge influence during my time at Duke. My vancomycin research mentor who contributed to my \$1.17/hour work weeks was Richard Drew, another Skolaut Award winner. (in truth I was a little afraid of Richard at the time, but he has been a good colleague and positive role model over the many years since then.) Nancy Allen LaPointe, another Skolaut Award winner, probably wouldn’t remember me but was someone I really respected as a resident.

Christine Rudd, a long-time pediatrics specialist at Duke, was the mentor who encouraged me to submit my DI response for publication and helped motivate me to pursue the academia career path. Byron May and Bill Pickard, a legend of pharmacy among people who were associated with Duke around that time, were the ones who introduced me to jet-skiing and BBQs at Jordan Lake. Gary Dunham, another legend of Duke pharmacy, was easily one of the most influential people I have ever met and was a hugely important influence on my career then and since.

And Milton W. Skolaut – to most of you he’s just a name on an award, but I had the pleasure of meeting him on a number of occasions and he always treated me with kindness and respect as a member of the

Duke Family. I clearly had the luxury of being surrounded by many outstanding role models and leaders during my time at Duke, and I owe a huge debt of gratitude to these and many other individuals who were so influential during my short time at Duke University Hospital.

You all may not fully realize it or appreciate it, but you also have some tremendous people here now who I have a great deal of respect for and who I have had the good fortune to count as colleagues and friends over the years – Richard Drew, Melissa Johnson, and Libby Dodds-Ashley (another Skolaut Award winner!) are immediately coming to mind as highly visible and respected leaders within the Infectious Diseases pharmacy community where I practice.

Ellen Boyle, I noticed you picked Emergency Medicine for your PGY2 – we should have discussed that one beforehand with all of the strong ID tradition and rich ID talent at Duke! But I'm proud of you!

OK, so let's turn to the reason why I'm here today, the Milton W. Skolaut Leadership Award. This award recognizes an individual for outstanding leadership and contributions to the profession of pharmacy. As I mentioned earlier, I don't really consider myself a leader the way we usually think of leaders.

The definition of leader is very different depending on where you look or who you ask. According to the Oxford Dictionary, a leader is "(1) The person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country; or (2) The principal player in a music group".

Another definition states, "a leader is a person who has commanding authority or influence." People have called me a lot of things but I don't think "commanding" was ever one of them.

Here's another definition of leadership which I like better: "Leadership is a set of qualities necessary to lead people or an organization. It is the art of motivating, guiding, and inspiring people to work together towards a common goal. Leadership qualities define what makes a leader effective. That's very different than having commanding authority, and notice that it's not a function of an official title or rank.

I found another list of essential leadership qualities that I found pretty interesting. It's a fairly long list, but I want you to listen carefully and think about whether you have what it takes to be a leader based on these qualities:

1. Integrity
2. Good communication skills
3. Good listener
4. Self-Awareness
5. Gratitude
6. Learning agility and adaptability
7. Empathy
8. Courage
9. Respect for others
11. Leads by example
12. Positive attitude
13. Never stops learning
14. Asks for & receives feedback
15. Provides constructive feedback
16. Honest and transparent
17. Fully present and engaged
18. Prioritizes the success of the organization

19. Owns their responsibilities

20. Understand their limits

21. Ability to delegate

The interesting thing about that list is that very few of those qualities are related to commanding authority or influence, or really even related to the way that many people define leaders or leadership. Also, again, they have nothing to do with a title -- these key leadership qualities can be learned and exercised by essentially anyone, at all levels of an organization. Most of the same qualities we describe as essential for leadership also describe good employees or just good people. Those qualities may help define a leader, but I'd also love to have those same qualities in the people that work for me or with whom I work.

Whether you recognize it or not, you all have most or all of the qualities and tools to be effective leaders if you choose to exercise them. I am very confident when I say that, without ever having met most of you, because I know the quality of individuals you probably are by virtue of what you've achieved professionally to get to this point and the strength of these Duke University Hospital programs -- Duke doesn't take slackers and if you're graduating from these programs I'm betting you're pretty good! You're ready to go forth and do great things!

You're already all leaders in your own right -- it's just a question of the size of your sphere of influence. You are already leaders perhaps without even recognizing you're doing it -- which is why I titled these remarks "The Value of Unintentional Leadership". Many of the people I listed previously as being highly influential during my residency and afterwards had no formal leadership title -- some did, but most practiced highly effective leadership just by being good pharmacists, good clinicians, good role models, and just plain good people. I don't think Richard Drew or Byron May or Libby Dodds-Ashley or Kuldip Patel necessarily wake up every morning thinking, "Today I'm going to go out to highly influence people and be a great leader!" Their leadership is not necessarily intentional -- they just do it by being good communicators, and listening, and being engaged, and being honest, and having integrity, and setting the proper tone in their work for all of the people around them to see and be influenced by. They're leaders by being good at what they do and helping their colleagues and co-workers around them do the same. They're often unintentional leaders -- but they're leaders nevertheless and it provides tremendous value to the organization.

Remember that we defined leadership as **a set of qualities necessary to motivate, guide, and inspire people to work together towards a common goal**. I happen to be a department chair at a school of pharmacy, and in this role I have the opportunity to exercise those qualities within a fairly large group of people, either intentionally or unintentionally. Your circles of influence may be smaller right now, but as you progress through your careers you will nevertheless have the ability to greatly influence those around you by being good listeners, and accepting and providing good feedback, and being empathetic, and being accountable, and having a positive attitude while working toward the success of your organization. And in so doing you will be influential role models and elevate all those around you -- you'll be unintentional leaders but highly effective and valuable nevertheless. Your often unintentional leadership will add great value to your work and will be appreciated by others.

I have worked with many individuals over the course of my career who I consider to be outstanding leaders, and the funny thing is that most of them held no formal, official leadership position or office. They were just good at what they did, let their good personal qualities shine, and positively influenced

those around them – they were unintentional leaders. And I greatly admired them for it. You don't necessarily have to specifically work toward being an effective leader or be given permission to do it with some official title – work hard, be a good example to others, be engaged with others, be a good person and your leadership will come naturally.

Oh, and by the way – if you ever feel so inclined to pursue more formal leadership opportunities at your jobs, or in professional societies, or in the community, GO FOR IT – there's no shortage of opportunities but often a shortage of people willing to step up and commit themselves to lead.

Again, I regret that I couldn't be there in person today, but I thank you again for this great honor of the Milton W. Skolauf Leadership Award – if I did anything to deserve it, I guarantee you it was mostly unintentional. I treasure my memories of my time at Duke and hope that you will all find your chosen career paths to be as challenging, and rewarding, and interesting as mine has been. If I can ever be of assistance, don't hesitate to reach out – just identify yourself as a Blue Devil and we're good to go! Best of luck to all of you, and thank you again!

What is the number one rule of leadership?

The first rule of leadership: **put your mission above your ego**. The second rule of leadership: if you don't care about your people, they won't care about your mission. The third rule of leadership: if someone has to tell you the first two rules, you're not ready to lead yet

The Golden Rule of leadership: **Leading others is a privilege that is earned not a right**. Leaders who understand that leading others is a privilege understand that leading first and foremost, is about service.

What is the golden rule leadership style?

Often they are living by the golden rule: **Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself**. It serves them well as a philosophy, but it does not always get the results they really want to see. So here's an alternative to the golden rule. The platinum rule: **Treat others as they would like to be treated**.