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## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

## Realizing pharmacy's significance

Good morning! Thank you for being here today.

And thank you for the trust and confidence you've placed in me. It's an honor to serve as the American Pharmacists Association's 163rd President. When I look at the board room wall with portraits of past presidents, names that represent some of the many leaders and their significant careers that have shaped our profession, I could not be prouder to stand before you here today. And now, I am proud that those portraits will include, for the first time, 3 women presidents in a row.

Normally, this is the time that I would thank the special people in my life who are here to support me. But I have to let you in on a genetic condition that I have. I have the crying gene. My dad has it, my grandfather had it, and I have it. When we talk about things close to the heart, we get choked up and can't speak. For that reason, I am going to thank them later in my talk.

As I walked up to the stage this morning, I couldn't help remembering my first Annual Meeting as a pharmacist back in 1985. At that first session, I sat all the way in the back by myself. In fact, I didn't even bother to look around for someone to sit next to, because I knew only a few other members. Back then, and sitting in the rear of the hall, I couldn't have imagined becoming President of this remarkable association. After all, I was just a small-town girl from Arkansas working in a very different area of practice.

How many times do we say or think "I'm just a ..."

"I'm just a nuclear pharmacist, what chance would I have to get elected?"

"I'm just a community pharmacist, I don't need to learn about pharmacogenomics."

"I'm just an employee pharmacist, those reimbursement issues are not my concern."

Or "I'm just a pharmacist, and if that is what the doctor wrote then it must be right."

In some ways, the "I'm just a" syndrome never goes away. What is your "I'm just a" that is limiting you and the profession from advancing your role as a health care provider? When I was a Presidential candidate, I visited various caucus groups to ask for their support. To tell the groups something about myself, I decided to share my Strengths Finder results. Many of you are aware of the *Strengths Finder* book by Tom Rath. My strengths are:

1. Maximizer—I like to seek a role in which I am helping people succeed, which fits my position of educator at UAMS.
2. [blank]

3. Relator—I derive pleasure and strength from being around close friends.

4. Ideation—I am fascinated by ideas and new connections.

5. WOO—Winning Others Over—I enjoy the challenge of meeting new people and getting to know them.

Now, if you look at the second strength, it's blank. That's because I decided not to share one of my strengths, which was *Significance*: *You want to be very significant in the eyes of other people. In the truest sense of the word you want to be recognized. You want to be heard. You want to stand out. In particular, you want to be known and appreciated for the unique strengths that you bring.*

As I read that strength again before those meetings, I thought, Wow! That sounds so self-centered. I was just that small-town girl from Arkansas. I was comfortable just being seen as a maximizer, a relator, fascinated by ideas, and a wooer. But I was worried that too many people would judge me for wanting to be heard, to stand out, and to be appreciated. I know I'm not alone. Indeed, that's a strong tendency in our profession, too strong, in fact.

But on the way to work one day it hit me. Significance is what I want for pharmacy! We should all want to be significant, as a profession and as professionals. That's one of the reasons we join an Association and come to meetings like this one. We need to be heard. We need to stand out. In particular, we need to be known and appreciated for the unique strengths that we bring to our country, our communities, and our care team. As John Maxwell says, "success is when I add value to myself. Significance is when I add value to others."

As your President, I am going to work with the APhA team to help you realize our profession's significance, this year and in the years ahead.

**Significant in the country**

The Association is going to continue pushing to make sure this country sees our significance. There is no good reason that pharmacists and their services are not recognized by Medicare. We are care providers! And really good ones, too! At my first Board of Trustees meeting, I became teary-eyed when the Board voted to allocate the initial \$1.5 million, of what has grown to \$3.5 million since, to pursue Provider Status. And that commitment continues.

In addition to the political advocacy to support pharmacists' patient care services, APhA is investing heavily to position pharmacists as ready to receive payment for their

services. APhA launched the Pharmacy Profiles system pilot last year in California and has plans to begin nationwide rollout during the coming year. Pharmacy Profiles will be a resource for those who engage, employ, contract with, or otherwise collaborate with pharmacists. This repository streamlines the gathering of all the professional and relevant personal information a pharmacist would need to support achievement and recognition as a health care provider.

With APhA leading the way, the pharmacists in this room and beyond are making sure we're heard. Like many of you, I am frustrated with the politics involved in getting provider status passed at the state and federal levels—but that is the hand we have been dealt. We will get it done because it is the right thing for our patients and profession, and we will do it together. Every day in this country, we demonstrate how significant we are, and with resilience we will continue our fight and finish the job to get the status we need.

When you go to the supermarket, after you've put your groceries in the car, do you take the shopping cart back to the bin, or do you leave it in the parking lot? Do you take that extra effort to do it right? Are you looking for ways that will have impact on the patient's health? Checking for medication adherence, asking about their immunizations, and wellness screenings, whether they have had a mammogram or colonoscopy? There are so many ways that we can play a significant role in patient health, some of which we are not even aware.

Let me share an example. When Arkansas pharmacist Kelsey McCain was a student pharmacist, she counseled a young woman who was prescribed medication for migraine headaches. McCain told her how the drug worked, when to take it, and warned her that if she gets a rash to seek medical attention. The patient ran into her several months later at the pharmacy and told Kelsey that she did get a rash which was initially treated as an allergic reaction after 2 visits to the ER, and it wasn't until she told the physician that her pharmacist warned her that the medication might cause a rash that they discovered she was suffering from Stevens-Johnson syndrome and admitted her to the hospital, where she recovered fully. Kelsey played a significant role by spending the extra time with her patient.

### Significant in our communities

Our actions speak more than any letters behind our name. When I was in high school, my next-door neighbor was a pharmacist, and I asked to work in his community pharmacy. On some Saturdays I worked with an older pharmacist named Opal Lee March. Opal Lee never attended pharmacy school. She was a licensed practical druggist who was grandfathered into practice.

Opal Lee was a sweet lady and was a good pharmacist, listening to her patients, identifying their health care needs, and providing the services or referring them to someone who could address their problem and improve their health outcomes. Opal's focus was her patients. I remember once when a patient was complaining about taking his blood pressure medicine. Opal Lee asked him if seeing his grandchildren grow up was important to him. She may not have been able to explain the mechanism of action, but she knew about medication adherence and motivational interviewing way before it was ever taught in pharmacy school.

It is very true that “People don't care about how much you know until they know how much you care.” That approach is what helped her have significance in the lives of her patients and community and encouraged me to go into pharmacy and make a difference in my community.

As Opal Lee demonstrated, our significance starts in our communities. APhA is helping us realize it. Our Foundation has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to build infrastructure within community pharmacies that will help us take care of our diabetic patients. The program will expand access to the National Diabetes Prevention Program's evidence-based lifestyle change program designed to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes among adults with prediabetes. Project ImPACT—Diabetes Prevention, in partnership with The Kroger Co. and Solera Health, uses members of the pharmacy team to identify at-risk adults and refer them to needed follow-up, including pharmacist-provided diabetes management services.

Another community need that APhA is helping pharmacists to fulfill relates to Medication Administration Services, or MAS. The success we've had administering vaccines is as a solid foundation for pharmacist engagement in this area. APhA has developed principles, practice guidance, and an implementation toolkit that support pharmacists' provision of MAS to patients.

### Significant on the patient care team

I know a kidney transplant pharmacist who works hard to make sure the patient leaves the hospital understanding the importance of his or her medication and calls the community pharmacist to ensure he or she has the correct medications, instructions, and prior authorizations for payment. She calls patients, and they call her directly on her work cellphone to ask any questions they have about medications, side effects, and possible interactions with OTC medications. I like to say that the surgeon does the transplantation and the pharmacist helps keep them alive! That's patient-centered, team-based care, and that pharmacist is my daughter Amy Hilliard.

In addition to demonstrating significance to our country and our communities, we need to be known and appreciated by the rest of the patient team for the unique strengths we bring to our health care teams. Somewhere along the way, the public and our professional partners lost clarity about what we do, and we were challenged to describe what it is that we do in patient care. Think about the numerous variations in terms and definitions over the years to describe what pharmacists do.

Most of the time, like Kelsey, Amy, Opal Lee, and others, we demonstrate our significance in our actions. But we also need words. In an effort to clarify and standardize definitions used to describe what pharmacists do, the Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners, or JCPP, recently revised the profession's medication therapy management definition, adopting a new global term and definition—medication management services, defined as “a spectrum of patient-centered, pharmacist-provided, collaborative services that focuses on medication appropriateness, effectiveness, safety, and adherence with the goal of improving health outcomes.” The broad term, medication management services, was chosen to

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