

Dear Dr. Bolling, that is, Phyllis - Thanks for your kind and generous remarks, thanks also to the NJPA Executive Board, and to the Planning Committee for arranging this two-day conference.

I am truly honored and humbled by receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award. What I have achieved in life was not much a result of talent but rather my ability to learn from others who gave considerable support to my efforts to improve myself.

It began with my parents, William and Ella Walton, who provided a humble home in which aspirational goals established a lifestyle for me doing things. Dad, having not gone beyond the third grade, exemplified industry by his consistent, strong work drive. No job was to be done halfway. Mother placed a premium on learning, as evidenced by assigning Spanish tutorial lessons at age 5. I never became fluent; it was designed to set a tone for what was to be expected of me. Much later, and given our meager finances, she saved enough money for me to attend NJ State Teachers College, tuition then \$80 per semester. My parents were pillars of guidance: work smart without sparing energy; be unstinting in the pursuit of learning.

Others responsible for my achievement were mentors. Though many were involved in that process, one person stood out, Gordon Derner, my major advisor in graduate school. I want to share a most meaningful and unforgettable experience. After reviewing the first draft of my dissertation, he said, "Throw it away, I don't want you to look at it again. Start over again" My response, "Ouch"---WOW. A serious challenge.! Months passed before we met to review my second draft. Net result: One new paragraph, a couple of sentence revisions. Gordon had helped me turn an apparent failure into a crowning success. I would have walked through a wall for him. That sentiment is reflected in the growth of the clinical psychology program at Adelphi College becoming known as the Derner Institute at Adelphi University, a fitting tribute to someone whose contributions to the field of applied psychology were significant. I would be surprised if there had been a better mentor.

I am also indebted to my colleagues and to my friends who shared personal and/or professional information. They were all storytellers whose offerings, whether short or long, provided lessons to be learned. In my experience, these stories often shed light on a path for me to pursue.

Thanks to my students from whom I learned a great deal, particularly in a practicum where they observed me conduct psychotherapy via a one-way vision mirror. They questioned my use of language, actions or lack of action, tactical plan, etc, many of which were instructive to me both as a therapist and teacher.

You have attended this conference to get some form of achievement. That's good. Whatever your accomplishment, please remember that what you learn can be a noble achievement when you help others in their quest for improvement.

Bon voyage, enjoy the journey.

