

Joe Coyne, PhD Acceptance Statement

Many weeks ago, after a particularly bumptious telephone conference the evening before, I got a call from Dr Morgan Murray, President of NJPA. I thought he was calling to finish up a few things from the call.

I was wrong.

He was calling to tell me about these Awards. When I got off the phone, I suddenly had very mixed feelings because I recalled several conversations over the years – some of those involved people in this room – especially when we talked about giving a “Lifetime” award and how we talked about giving it before it was “too late” – was this my curtain call! I started to wonder if somebody was going to punch my ticket before this evening. Was Gabriel going to call me home any time soon?

But seriously, I am greatly honored to receive the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award and the Mentor of the Year Award from NJPA. I would like to extend a special thanks to my family: my son Ryan, daughter-in-law Sarah, my granddaughter Lila, daughter Kelly, my nephew and niece, Marc and Eva, and their two children, Isabella and Jonathan, as well as my sister Kathy and brother-in-law Tom (who could not be here tonight) for all their love and encouragement and, most of all, my wife Stephanie, for her unwavering support and encouragement throughout the years.

In Homer’s *Odyssey*, when Odysseus leaves for war, he places his elderly friend, whose name is Mentor, in charge of his house and as guardian of his son, Telemachus. The myth goes on to tell of the goddess Athena assuming to image of Mentor to talk with Telemachus.

Because the goddess thus justifies encouragement and guidance in dealing with personal problems, the name “Mentor” has been handed down through the ages to one who imparts knowledge and shares wisdom.

So, first, I would also like to thank my seniors on this profession of ours who mentored me.

I therefore wish to thank my mentors – Dr Abbie Salny, former Vice Chair of the Psychology Department at Montclair State who first took me under her wing, Dr Neil Massoth, who mentored me in our work at both NJPA and APA, and Dr Dan Williams, my former professor, mentor, supervisor, and now friend for 47 years, for their wisdom and guidance.

But now, I would like to thank my mentee, Dr Michelle Pievsky, who, I discovered, nominated me for the Mentor of the Year Award. For many years, one of my favorite activities as a teacher has been advising my students. The best part of doing this work is watching students grow and eventually enter places beyond where you were. Michele is an exemplar of this experience: she is brilliant, energetic, passionate, and creative. She has already far surpassed the point I was at this stage in her career. What

more satisfaction can there be to see the prospect of your own student's achievements moving beyond yours.

When I was thinking about tonight, I also started thinking about all the other gifts I have received as a direct result of being a member of NJPA for 38 years. I started out working with some of you as colleagues and, somehow, I gained close and lifelong friends.

So, I want to thank my sister-by-a-different mister, Dr Ozzie Haller, and her husband – my dear friend Jack, who was taken from us much before his time, dear friends Dr Ray & Pat Hanbury, Drs Dennis and Laura Finger, Dr Joan and Vinnie Fiorello, (these are our “New Year’s Eve Gang”) each of these people entered my life through some project we worked on in some past age and have become cherished friends over the last 25+ years.

I came from a rather poor, working class background. It is only by reason of my education that I have been able to accomplish anything. I think education creates opportunities and I am very aware of the opportunities (and second chances) I have been given.

Those of you who know me well know I have received WAY TOO much Jesuit education. (It only takes a mere 12 years to become a Jesuit priest – I have 14 years – 4 years high school, 4 years undergrad, and 6 years doctorate. I wonder sometimes whether I got gypped but I think it is really because I am a bit dull at times.) In any case, I want to thank the Jesuits of the Province of New York for the opportunities they gave me.

I still get together with my high school classmates (from my all-boys Jesuit high school) a few times each year – we will meet again at the beginning of December for our Annual Christmas dinner in NYC. Even though we are now old men, not a time goes by when someone doesn't mention how that experience changed their lives.

Within our tradition, this is referred to, in Latin, as the “Suscipe”, the unearned (and unexpected and, I may even say, unexpectable) gift. Most people understand the idea of a ‘gift being given’. But the “Suscipe” calls for more It calls the recipient to give BACK the gift they have received.

So, I must tell you these awards came quite unexpectedly and left me quite speechless and humbled. Among the greatest of gifts are those given by one's own colleagues.

Since I have had time to recover, I thought that this moment is really not about just me - it is about all the people all around me over all this time - it is most certainly about YOU.

It is an opportunity for you to serve – to give back - to join a committee, to help with reviewing CE, to help with the NJPA Foundation, to become a mentor to one of our graduate students or to an ECP, to take on an Affiliate position, or maybe to run for the Executive Board.

Times certainly have changed and most people seem to struggle with how to spend their time and energy.

The work of governance is not easy - it is a sacrifice - a sacrifice not everyone can or should take on. But for those of you who are thinking about it now, I encourage you to take the step.

So, to all the people here - too numerous to mention by name - my colleagues, my friends, my dear friends, my lifelong friends, and especially my family, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve and, in some small way, to give back the gifts I have received.