

Dr. Ron Silikovitz
2019 Lifetime Achievement Award

MY COLLEAGUES, FAMILY MEMBERS, AND FRIENDS,

I DEDICATE THIS AWARD TO MY LOVING PARENTS, SYLVIA AND MOE, OF BLESSED MEMORY, WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN ECSTATIC. AND TO MY SISTER INA AND SON HARVEY, WHO COULD NOT BE HERE THIS EVENING. I DO ACCEPT THIS AWARD WITH HUMILITY AND APPRECIATION.

SO, WHAT IS A LIFETIME? HOW IS IT MEASURED?

ACCORDING TO PSALM 90, VERSE 10, "THE YEARS OF OUR LIFE ARE THREEScore AND TEN." WHEN THIS WAS WRITTEN, THE NORMAL SPAN OF A HUMAN LIFE WAS SAID TO BE 70 YEARS. YES, I HAVE THANKFULLY PASSED THAT MILESTONE.

IN FACT, THIS YEAR, 2019, MARKS THE 50TH YEAR SINCE I EARND MY DOCTORATE DEGREE (AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINIOIS), THE 40TH YEAR OF CLINICAL SERVICE TO MY CLIENTS, AND OF MY MEMBERSHIP IN NJPA.

NUMBERS MAY BE INTERESTING, BUT WHAT I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU THIS EVENING CANNOT BE MEASURED WELL BY DIGITS FROM 1-100. I CHOOSE, RATHER, TO SHARE PERSONAL INFORMATION AND THOUGHTS.

MEET MY SON ANDY, TORAH READER AT A SYNAGOGUE IN MONTCLAIR AND SINGING STAR OF X-FACTOR (ONCE HUGGED ON NATIONAL TV BY PAULA ABDUL);... ARLENE, MY WIFE OF 55 YEARS, OFFICE MANAGER, SINGER IN SEVERAL CHORALES, CAT PERSON EXTRAORDINAIRE, AND BEST FRIEND. MY SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO GAYE OLIN, OUR FRIEND FOR MANY YEARS, WHO, WITH HER HUSBAND RON, OF BLESSED MEMORY, HAS ENJOYED SO MANY HAPPY EXPERIENCES WITH US. I AM ALSO PROUD TO SHARE THIS EVENING WITH MY SPECIAL GUESTS FROM THE COMMUNITY, OUTSIDE OF MY OFFICE.

HOW DID MY PROFESSIONAL WORK EVER GET TO THIS POINT? ACTUALLY, THIS JOURNEY HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT AND PERHAPS UNIQUE.

THROUGHOUT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, AND MY FRESHMAN YEAR AT PENN, ALL IN MY HOME TOWN, PHILADELPHIA, MATH WAS MY THING. I HAVE BEEN TOLD, AT HIGH SCHOOL CLASS REUNIONS, THAT I WOULD GO UP TO THE BLACKBOARD AND WRITE AND SOLVE ESOTERIC EQUATIONS PROBABLY UNDERSTOOD JUST BY A FEW. I LOVED....NUMBERS... AND MATHEMATICAL CHALLENGES.

MY LIFE CHANGED DRAMATICALLY AFTER MISSING A FINAL EXAM IN A P CALCULUS BECAUSE MY HIGH SCHOOL AND PENN BUDDY BARRY AND I WERE ABSENT WHEN THE EXAM DATE MOVED UP. THE KIND PROFESSOR, DR SCHUB, ALLOWED BOTH OF US TO MAKE UP THIS OPEN BOOK FINAL, IN HIS APARTMENT ON CAMPUS ON A SATURDAY MORNING. WE EACH HAD PRIVATE ROOMS (NO DISTRACTIONS WATCHING OTHERS)....., THE PROFESSOR SERVED MILK AND COOKIES. MUSIC WAS PIPED IN. AND THOUGH I APPARENTLY KNEW THE SUBJECT MATTER, IT WAS, BLOOD, SWEAT, AND BIG-TIME ANXIETY, AND I REALLY THOUGHT THAT I WOULD FAIL THE EXAM, FLUNK OUT OF COLLEGE, AND JUST NOT MAKE IT.

TO MY SURPRISE AND DELIGHT, I EARNED A B+ OR A- IN THE EXAM AND IN THAT CALCULUS COURSE. BUT THIS WAS THE END OF MY FASCINATION WITH MATH AND A TURNING POINT IN MY LIFE. SOMEHOW- I CAN'T AT ALL REMEMBER HOW OR WHY- I DECIDED TO MAJOR IN PSYCHOLOGY AT PENN.

AFTER LATER EARNING MY DOCTORATE IN CLINICAL CHILD PSYCHOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, MY FOCUS WAS THEN NOT ON THE PRIVATE PRACTICE OF PSYCHOLOGY. IN FACT, MY FIRST PROFESSIONAL JOB WAS ACTUALLY DOING CLINICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ADULTS IN A DAY PROGRAM IN MANHATTAN.

WHEN I HAPPENED TO COME ACROSS DR. RICHARD KLEIN, A PSYCHOLOGIST THEN IN CALDWELL, WHO IS NOW RETIRED, HE WONDERED ALOUD WHY I HAD NOT TAKEN THE LICENSING EXAM (I HAD NOT)

AND GONE INTO PRIVATE PRACTICE.

SOME TIME LATER, THOUGH WORKING FULL-TIME AND STILL RESISTANT, I TOOK THE EXAM AND, IN 1979, AT AGE 38, I BECAME LICENSED. I JOINED NJPA. MY INITIAL PRIVATE PRACTICE WORK WAS WITH RICHARD KLEIN, AND I SHARED HIS OFFICE FOR FIVE YEARS. IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1985, WHEN I WAS 44 YEARS OLD, THAT I OPENED MY OWN FIRST OFFICE.

THE REST, AS YOU KNOW, HAS BEEN HISTORY.

AS I GAZE AT THE FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES WHO REPRESENT MY NOW 30-YEARS PEER CONSULTATION GROUP, BONNIE BRAE, COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED, THE WEST ORANGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CONGREGATION OHEB SHALOM, THE ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS, AND MY OFFICE BUILDING, I THINK OF THE ANGEL CLARENCE, WHO REMINDS GEORGE BAILEY, IN MY FAVORITE ALL-TIME FILM, IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, THAT 'EACH MAN'S LIFE TOUCHES ...[AND MAY I ADD IS TOUCHED BY]... SO MANY OTHER LIVES."

MY CONGRATULATIONS TO DANIEL, DUNCAN, JOE, AND PHYLLIS, AND MUCH APPRECIATION TO NJPA. MAY YOU ALL GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.