

Answers to 50th Anniversary questionnaire:

• **Challenges** – A huge issue arose about ¼ of the way through my presidential year. A local hospital was petitioned by the local SEIU union to become the bargaining agent for certain groups of employees. This was the first activity in central New York regarding the unionization of health care workers. As one could imagine, this set off a flurry of activity. As an effort to defeat the union, the hospital petitioned the union to have included in the bargaining unit, Registered Pharmacists. The logic behind this move was that the hospital perceived that this group of Professional Employees, not wanting to be represented by this union, would indeed create negative votes and that would be advantageous to the hospital who wanted to defeat the union. The NYS Board of Labor was called in to adjudicate this petition because the union wanted the pharmacists included in the unit. The union won their petition to include pharmacists. So now the pharmacists were in a really difficult position. The Pharmacists therefore went to the NYSCHP and petitioned the Council to become the bargaining unit for the pharmacists. After a huge amount of time spent on this issue, bringing in ASHP, Carl DeMarco, legal counsel, ASHP House of Delegates, on and on and ultimately the Council was certified as the official bargaining agent and the union for the pharmacists and they were now represented by a “labor union”. I can remember distinctly, at the annual House of Delegates Meeting that year Tom Garrison, at the time in Kansas City, came up off his chair and ran toward me as I addressing the House, screaming at me that, “The New York State Council was destroying the practice of Pharmacy and who did we think we were, proposing a change in the ASHP House that the national organization should be recognized as a Labor Union for pharmacists? We were all a bunch of Marxists’ and should be thrown out of the House”. Well, here we are many years later, with more pressing issues before us.

• **Memorable** – My last year that Presidents were “elected” by the representatives to the Council meetings which was held quarterly, approximately, mostly in Albany. The council became a direct membership, dues paying organization soon after, and elected offices were voted on by the individual members. This was a big change in structure.

• **Strides** – I think we dropped the ball, when prescriptive authority was allowed for nurse practitioners and physician assistants. We had a window of opportunity, , but the medical (physician) community felt really threatened by pharmacists, knowing that we had a knowledge base, pharmaceutically driven that would challenge their authority to retain this unique practice that they guarded zealously. So they caved to nurses, etc. because they perceived them as more controllable. Interestingly, this still

goes on! If prescriptive authority is finally granted this will be an affirmative step forward. The Journal is a great example of ongoing efforts to keep the membership informed and when it was started many years ago, it was on the cutting edge.

• Next 50 Years – I am concerned about the entire health care delivery system, the costs and financing of health care, the availability of personnel, the interference of government and third party payers, the closing of hospitals, the shrinking of long term care facilities, the rationing of health care, the ideas that “Canada has a much better system...let’s adopt it”. If we pharmacists, the council is to survive and flourish, it will be incumbent that we clearly make our position known and that we can demonstrate factually, that we are a value added sector of providers. Fortunately, I am on the right side of the Bell shaped Curve and will be able to leave this with practitioners who are much better qualified than I to resolve these seemingly overwhelming issues facing our children and grand-children. That is what concerns me the most!

Bradford Wirth Obituary

" I never had a bad day in my life." Brad would say with a delightful smile, the testimony of a man in love with life.

A Boy Scout from his early years, he became an Eagle Scout, and joyfully laid the foundation for lifelong service to others. After graduating from Nottingham High School he earned a B.S. in Pharmacy from Purdue University, and was a member of the Marching Band and Phi Kappa Psi, a current member of the Amber B.S. Troop 11.

An outstanding Ambassador to the profession of Pharmacy, he served in many roles: First Chief Pharmacist of Community General Hospital, Chief Pharmacist of Auburn Memorial Hospital, Consultant for NeighborCare. Also an EMT for Amber Fire Dept. With a jovial chuckle, one would often hear him say," I live to serve." He adored his family, each one being so special to him.

He loved the Adirondacks where he blissfully would examine the inside of his eyelids, listen to the grass grow and snore in unison with the sound of singing waters that rushed past the front door of his camp.

He engaged immediately with people everywhere he went, becoming one with them, no matter what their station in life maybe.