



## **HBA 2008 WOTY Comments**

### **Star Volunteer Acceptance**

**Anne Camille Talley  
Health Leaders Consultancy**

Thank you, Elizabeth.

Did you all know that she's a neurosurgeon? I guess that, at least *this* year, to be the President of the HBA *really does* take a brain surgeon. We are most fortunate to have your energy and your wisdom and your leadership, Elizabeth.

I am so pleased to accept this award. I believe that I represent a few thousand of you who give your time and expertise so generously.

Our individual and corporate *members* are the heart and soul of the HBA. Our *volunteers* are the powerhouse, the engine of all the good we do.

I think it's in our nature to volunteer. In fact, I think that volunteering is how we strengthen and tone our corporate and civic *governance* muscles. This strength and muscle is good for us individually. It's good for our volunteer organizations. It's good for our employers. It's good for our community.

We who are here today, and those who we work with, have the *nature* to reach beyond our paid roles. We're a fortunate few. Gifted with great educations, rewarding jobs (most of the time), and *hearts* drawn professionally to the life science industry. We understand that we have the *responsibility* to continue to advance ourselves and our employer companies as we work on teams, on committees, with review boards, in think tanks and in other assorted task forces who must, over the coming years, no doubt, reshape the future of health care.

If not us, then who will do it? If not us, who?

Let's be ready to step up to the plate.

As volunteers, without putting our living directly on the line, we figure out how to manage our emotions to stay professional and how to work with different personalities with different points of view. We learn to act within policy. We deliberate and we vote for our leadership and vote to update organizational bylaws. We *govern* our own chapters and affiliates of the HBA. We learn how to conduct ourselves in the type of civil discourse that makes us "civilized."

Along the way, we pick up skills and practices that we need to grow in our jobs and in our personal, professional and community lives.

Now, to turn to my most immediate responsibility as your representative Star Volunteer:

I must acknowledge the folks who put me on this dais today.

Thank you to Susan Roessner Dodson, then president of the HBA, for calling me one day in 1992 to ask me to take over the Chair of the HBA Research Committee. She said: "I'm calling for the Healthcare Businesswomen's Association. We only want you to commit to what you think is reasonable... and to send up a 'smoke signal' if you see that you can't do what you've committed to. If that happens, we'll just find another member to fill in for you." That was "Sue's Promise."

I am here today to testify that about 85% of my now 16 years experience as an HBA volunteer has lived right up to "Sue's Promise."

Every now and again, I *forget* to send up a timely "smoke signal"... or occasionally a fellow volunteer, in the rush of her own responsibilities, forgets briefly that this is a volunteer gig.

*Those* moments move me to practice having difficult conversations... without putting my current job on the line... and either 'fessing up to my less-than-hoped-for volunteer performance or occasionally I need to push back on someone who has briefly forgotten that *I am not getting paid for this*.

Thanks to Shellie Caplan, your 2007 Star Volunteer, who gave Sue Dodson my name and number... but who also has given me so many wonderful lessons in grooming my "executive presence." How am I doing today, Shelly?

Thanks to Barbara Pritchard and Lisa Courtade, who have been my co-chairs on the E.D.G.E. in Leadership Study. Barbara is the heart and soul of that most significant HBA research project, and she led us to glory. And that's just the *tip of the iceberg* of all Barbara has done for this organization.

Lisa organized and designed this ground-breaking E.D.G.E. benchmark study. When she asked me to cover her for a short leave -- and then for her "mat leave" to deliver her second son, Ben -- I remembered "Sue's Promise" and responded to Lisa's "smoke signal."

I can't say enough about the rest of the E.D.G.E. Study teams and committees; dozens of amazing women have stepped up to do the heavy lifting of putting our findings into action... to *move the needle* before we measure it again in 2010.

By the way, if you're interested and have experience in implementing the results of research, please write E.D.G.E. on your business card and give it to one of us on the "E.D.G.E. Forward" committee today.

Thanks to our 2008 Woman of the Year, Charlotte Sibley. In the '80s, Charlotte showed me by her example and by her gentle, informal mentoring the importance of participating in professional organizations. She taught me to network, that I could *learn* to lead, pay something forward and also reach back to newer members of the industry to offer a leg-up.

Thanks to all of you who wrote those "Star Volunteer" nomination letters on my behalf. You know who you are. If I knew who you were, I'd tell stories about you, today too.

Thanks to my wonderful Schering Plough colleagues who have truly figured out how to gain trust every day, while also balancing great work with good lives.

Thanks to my parents who saw to it that I got 21 years of Catholic education and showed me a million examples of adding volunteer commitments to a busy life in order to “do the right thing.”

Finally, and *most* lovingly, I cannot tell you how sweet it is to be married to my favorite man, Bob Talley. He asks me all the time: “Don’t all your girlfriends’ husbands cook and take care of the house while the women travel?” I tell him: “Of course, Darling! They *all* do that... but *nobody* as well as you do.” *Shhhhh.... don’t tell him the truth! He’s sitting right there!*

The highest calling of the spirit of volunteerism is not about self-aggrandizement or about getting rich or powerful, although there are elements of volunteering that may help with those goals. The highest calling is about supplying fellow travelers with what they need, be it organizing a seminar, leading a committee, providing responsible governance, succession planning, networking to offer newbies a “leg-up,” or giving someone who needs it some hot food, medicine or blankets.

Volunteering is charity that transforms the giver.

Let’s remember that as we volunteer, we fulfill our responsibilities devolving from the many gifts we have as people privileged to live as we do, in this “heart-ful” and successful industry. And, at the same time we maintain and nurture our civic health.

*Here’s a challenge:* think about an annual personal “day of service.” If you’re not already volunteering, find something that needs doing, put it on your calendar and do it. For free.

I’m not suggesting that you risk your job or rob your family of a day of your time. I’m asking you to consider increasing what you “pay forward” by 1/365<sup>th</sup> of a year.

But don’t forget “Sue’s Promise”: be civilized and do what you can reasonably commit to and cover for each other when your sister -- or your brother -- needs a bit of help.

THANKS for this wonderful honor. I share the joy with all of you, but I’ll keep the Tiffany crystal on *my* desk!

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