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## PROFILES OF EXCELLENCE

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### Joseph B. Wiederholt: Teacher Until the End— Neptune and Beyond

Peggy A. Wiederholt

*I can deal with the uncertainty  
of the future and I can handle  
the side effects of chemotherapy,  
but I can't imagine not  
being able to teach.*

—Joe Wiederholt, 1994

#### INTRODUCTION

When Joe was first asked to write  
an autobiographical account for the  
“Profiles of Excellence” series in

*This series will provide the reader with personal information and a career road map of those individuals recognized for their skills as teachers. The intent is that this perspective will help us understand how others achieved their successes and allow us to expand our pool of role models.*

*If you really love to do something, it follows that you must have fun doing it. Joe Wiederholt had fun teaching—fun with both the process and the product. This was a quality that he shared with his students and his colleagues; his enthusiasm and energy were empowering.*

*I had the privilege of hearing Joe's “George” presentation in 1995 and listening to the impact that his lesson had on the audience. Even in the process of illness, he took the opportunity to provide a learning moment about pharmaceutical care. He made the phrase personal, not just some politically correct mantra that was on the lips but not in the heart or in action. That was the gift of the man as a teacher.*

*Joseph Wiederholt was an embracing kind of man with his own concept of correctness. He was not afraid to embrace new ideas or ways of looking at things. He was not timid; he would stand for the things that he believed in, and he passionately believed in teaching.*

Dennis B. Worthen

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*This profile is dedicated to our son, Jade, and our daughter, Mekel. They have taught us the true meaning of life, of love, and of happiness.*

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July of 2000, he was at a loss for words. Far beyond a case of writer's block, he simply could not write about himself. He was more than honored that he had been identified as a "master teacher," but he really had difficulty seeing himself as such. Although he had recently received the Distinguished Pharmacy Educator of the Year Award from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP), an award he treasured, he just could not picture himself alone in the spotlight. He never saw himself as an individual achiever. Instead, Joe felt he was a part of a *team* dedicated to the profession he loved so dearly.

Joe attributed any success in his life to the accomplishments of others around him. "*They just make me look good,*" he would say. Consequently, we developed a plan where Joe and I would talk about his life and I would pen his profile. This was an acceptable plan to Joe since he and I, as husband and wife, best friends and soul mates, would work as a team.

In the fall of 1999, Joe was diagnosed with recurrent metastatic colon cancer. Originally diagnosed in 1994, the cancer had been in remission for 5 years after Joe initially underwent surgery and a year of chemotherapy. After the recurrence of the cancer he underwent several more regimens of investigational chemotherapy and required another surgery in August of 2000, followed by more treatment. Consequently, he requested and was granted an extension of the timeline for completion of his profile.

Over the ensuing months, we watched the leaves turn yellow and bronze, falling to the ground to be covered by a blanket of snow until, eventually, flowers peeked through the ground in the spring of 2001. As one season gave way to another, the cancer defied all regimens of chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation therapy, until finally, on Memorial Day, May 28, 2001, Joe's life in this world ended.

We were never able to write Joe's profile before his death, but we talked as we have for over 30 years together, sharing our thoughts, our prayers, and our dreams. When I was asked to write the profile after his death, I knew that it was something that I not only could do but needed to do, knowing that Joe would be with me in spirit, refreshing my memory and guiding my hand. Nicknamed "Neptune" by his graduate students for the mind trips that they traveled together, Joe loved teaching. Until he breathed his last breath, he was truly a teacher to the end. The quotes from Joe in this profile have been taken from his curriculum vitae, personal conversations, and taped interviews with our family. This is his story through my eyes and from my heart.

## **THE BEGINNING**

I cannot talk about Joe the teacher without reflecting on Joe the man, for the threads of each intertwine to form the fabric of his character. Joseph Bernard Wiederholt was born on Labor Day, September 5, 1949, the first-born son of Vitus Valentine and Helen Wiederholt. Named after the grandfathers who walked before him, he was nicknamed “Joe Ben” by his family.

Joe’s birthplace was Sioux City, Iowa. Known by today’s generation as the home of the Gateway® computer, Joe preferred to remember Sioux City for the history that preceded the birth of twentieth century technology. It is often said that your environment significantly influences your growth and development. Clearly, this was the case with Joe.

In May of 1804, captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark led a crew of about 40 men on an epic journey. Commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson, they were assigned the challenge of finding the shortest and most convenient route of communication between the U.S. and the Pacific Ocean, traveling in unexplored territories (1). On August 21, 1804, Lewis and Clark camped near what is now known as Sioux City, Nebraska, across the Missouri River from Sioux City, Iowa, named after the Sioux Indians who inhabited the territory before the white man claimed the land (2).

Joe had an insatiable hunger for history and would spend hours reading about the generations that preceded him, often dreaming of what it would have been like to be part of a great exploration into the unknown. He could almost feel the excitement that Lewis and Clark had experienced when they looked over the virgin Great Plains and saw herds of mighty bison, which Joe admired as a symbol of strength and survival. The history of our country energized him and allowed him to embrace the concept that untraveled roads should be explored. It gave him extraordinary vision to look into the future and dare to venture in uncharted waters, as his students would later learn on their thought-sharing trips to Neptune.

Companioned with his interest in history was a love of the out-of-doors. To him, everything in nature was a treasure to be cherished and preserved. The world around him was a work of art that not only brought him peace and comfort but also offered him an environment conducive to problem solving, thinking, and developing creative ideas. When he became an avid fly fisherman in his later years, it was more the bonding with nature than the fish that he found addicting, unless it was a really BIG fish!

An appreciation for the world around him was embedded in a strong religious faith. Raised as a Catholic, Joe treasured his faith and his family above all else. He was most thankful particularly to his mother for “dragging” him to church in his childhood, leading him on the path to practicing his Christianity. He gave thanks to his Creator throughout his life for the beauty around him and the love that nourished and sustained him even in the most challenging times.

Joe found at an early age that he sometimes danced to a different drum. His memories of his elementary school years at Blessed Sacrament School in Sioux City were fixated on being “kicked out” of kindergarten for refusing to take a nap. This was an incident he remained most proud of throughout his adult life. It was, after all, his earliest recollection of taking a stand on what was very important to him at the time. It was, as I have learned, a predictor of future stands he would take in his years as a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin, standing up for what he believed was right, even if it meant standing alone. When taking an unpopular stand he told me, *“Even though I’m getting shot at, I make my point and then get out of the way! I believe that people respect me for my candor.”*

One of Joe’s greatest regrets was not achieving the rank of Eagle Scout in Boy Scouts. This experience really affected his sense of commitment. Influenced by the virtues of hard work and sacrifice exemplified in the daily lives of his parents, he adopted a strong and dedicated work ethic which became the groundwork of future success. Whether working on construction, in a brickyard, on a bakery delivery truck, in a pharmacy, or in the classroom, he gave 100% of himself. His parents were his first teachers, and he learned valuable lessons from their example, their love, and their encouragement, lessons that he would teach his own children as a dedicated and loving father. *“Whatever I did I always tried to do my best,”* he said. *“My dad taught me that . . . and you respect everyone . . . you respect everyone.”*

On the occasion of his parent’s fiftieth wedding anniversary Joe wrote, *“At home, you prepared us for life’s journey. When we left home and assumed the responsibility for our own journey, your guidance was always there. For example, a pat on the back, a word of encouragement, a hardy laugh, a piece of advice, a thank you, a stare of concern, a loving hug and a hard felt hand shake. Your guidance continues to influence us as you travel life’s golden years. If we watch and listen closely, you teach us how to age gracefully and with dignity, how to cope with illness and death, how to enjoy life, how to come to grips with one’s own*

*mortality, and how to nurture the family, which is now extended to four generations.”*

As I reflect on this message now, it reminds me that the same was true of Joe as a teacher providing support, encouragement, and guidance to junior faculty and students who will influence future generations. His vision throughout his career was to nurture young people, knowing that they are the future of pharmacy practice and pharmacy education. With that in mind, a basic lesson, according to Joe, in becoming a good teacher was to be a good student first, to keep an open mind, to be a good listener, and to learn by the example of others.

Growing up with two sisters and two brothers, Joe also learned the challenges of conflict, the necessity of negotiation, and the importance of teamwork. Perhaps one of the most accurate words describing Joe’s work philosophy was “teamwork.” This was a recurrent theme throughout his personal and professional life, and he was willing to make personal sacrifices to build consensus. *“Sometimes you have to swallow your pride to come together,”* he said.

I found a card in Joe’s office files after his passing that echoed his philosophy about team building. The card pictured three buffalo grazing. He was always drawn to Native American art and verse, particularly cards that pictured the buffalo. He appreciated the symbolism and the spirituality of the Indian artisans. The verse on the card was a quotation from Albert Camus: “Don’t walk in front of me, I may not follow. Don’t walk behind me, I may not lead. Walk beside me, and just be my friend.”

### **THE COLLEGE YEARS**

After graduating from Heelan Catholic High School, Joe attended Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. It was at Creighton that he became part of a brotherhood of lifetime friends. As one of his brotherhood friends wrote in a tribute in the fall 2001 issue of the *Creighton University Magazine*, “We were students of the 60’s but hardly the students most people associate with that period. There were no drugs, war protests or dropping out in the group. We focused on getting a degree and taking advantage of the opportunity our parents gave us” (3).

Joe valued his education at Creighton. He embraced the Jesuit philosophy and believed that one person can truly make a difference in this world. When asked why he chose pharmacy as his field of study, he said that it was really a practical decision. He had considered medicine and

dentistry, but his grades were only “average.” He thought, however, that his grades were good enough (with a little luck) to admit him to pharmacy school and that pharmacy would give him a chance to prove himself and provide him with a good career. It did both, but it did much more. Over the years, the profession of pharmacy became a true *passion* of love and devotion.

Joe’s greatest achievement at Creighton, in his opinion, was meeting me. I was a nursing student in Omaha and took classes at Creighton. My greatest achievement was meeting him. Since I was the first female born in my father’s family line in over 80 years, Joe often bragged that his most courageous act was meeting my father, my brother, and my uncles. After he survived the encounter unscathed, we married in August of 1971, right before he started his second year in pharmacy school.

Joe worked long hours to complete his pharmacy internship requirements while attending pharmacy school. During his internship, he was assigned to clinical rotations at Saint Joseph Hospital in Omaha. Interestingly, he just happened to be assigned to the cardiology rotation—interesting because I was the head nurse of the coronary intensive care unit to which he was assigned. He thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to brag that he was “involved” with “the boss.” I thoroughly enjoyed *being* the boss! Joe always supported my nursing career and never complained about sharing household and family responsibilities.

Joe also worked as a pharmacy intern at a local hospital in Omaha. One of his favorite memories was of delivering “stat” meds to one of the inpatient units. Since the pharmacy operated a dumbwaiter, he would crawl inside and ride the dumbwaiter to the appropriate floor. Of course, an unsuspecting nurse would open the doors and Joe would be sitting there with a big grin that bubbled into a hardy laugh as he handed over the stat meds.

Joe graduated from Creighton in 1973 with his B.S. in Pharmacy. I was awarded a Ph.T. degree at a pharmacy school award ceremony, the Ph.T. standing for “*Put husband Through.*” It was by far the best investment in my modest portfolio. The value today is priceless. Soon after graduation, we welcomed the arrival of our son, Jade, followed 15 months later by the birth of our daughter, Mekel. Such dual accomplishments were quite remarkable given our busy schedules and would have served as interesting case studies in Time Management 101.

While we were at Creighton, the Vietnam War was a cloud hanging over our heads. Joe’s draft number for the service was 63. He was in ROTC and was made well aware of the challenges of the unconventional battle that was taking place and the lives that were being lost on

foreign soil. Although he knew that his service commitment would have to be honored, he was allowed to finish his education and to stay on at the Creighton School of Pharmacy as an instructor for a year before he reported for active duty as an officer in the Army Medical Service Corps. That year at Creighton as an instructor inspired Joe and lit a spark within his soul that would eventually lead him to an academic career. Under the guidance of Dean Bob Gerraughty and Professor Walt Gloor, he experienced the wonders of teaching and hungered for more. He recalled how, “*They took me under their wings and allowed me to run things, to do things. Go, Wiederholt, go,*” they would say. “*We trust you.*” It was also at Creighton that he met Father Richard McGloin, a Jesuit priest, who became one of Joe’s lifetime confidantes and mentors.

Joe believed that each of these three men played a key role in his pharmacy career. They were willing to take a risk, to give him a chance to prove himself, to see beyond an “average” student, knowing that ordinary men are capable of doing extraordinary things. Joe remembered their wisdom during his later years when he served on the admissions committee at the University of Wisconsin, supporting the admission of students whom he knew just needed someone to give them a chance, to take a risk. He felt that students must be profiled beyond just a GPA.

### ***THE ROAD TO SUCCESS***

By the time Mekel was born, Joe was an officer at the Academy of Health Sciences at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, with an adjunct appointment at Baylor University. While serving there, he redesigned the U.S. Army Pharmacy technician training program, advanced to the rank of Captain and received the Army Commendation Medal.

Service in the army was a positive experience for Joe. Although he despised marching in parades, he learned much about commitment and leadership. Joe also moonlighted while in San Antonio at a retail pharmacy, and he loved it. In addition, he was offered the opportunity to work at one of the local hospitals. He loved every aspect of pharmacy and wanted to practice it all. However, with two young children under the age of two and a wife who was working weekends as a critical care nurse, he soon realized that an important part of life was setting priorities and making choices. He turned down the offer at the hospital, deciding to spend time at home instead. From that time on, he always put his family first. He described this as a *life-learning event*. “*If you want to be*



*successful in life . . . however you measure success . . . you have to have balance in your life,”* he later explained to our grown children.

Joe’s interest in teaching was nourished at the academy. The spark that flickered at Creighton was ignited into a flame burning with a brilliance not to be ignored. He wanted to pursue graduate education but was torn between a Pharm.D. and a Ph.D. and worried about the hardship such an endeavor would cause our young family. He decided to apply to the Pharm.D. program at the University of Texas, reasoning that it would be the least burdensome to our family considering the location and the time to complete the degree. I remember the day he received a rejection letter from the University of Texas as if it were yesterday.

Although the initial shock of not being accepted at Texas was difficult to absorb, I did my best to console and encourage him. I believed that this was but a sign that Joe had chosen the wrong path. I felt certain that he truly yearned for a Ph.D. and that this should be his goal. I suspected that he had chosen the Pharm.D. route for convenience rather than out of passion. He agreed and began a new mission with an eagerness that even amazed me. He researched programs and found his greatest interest was in an innovative area of pharmacy education called pharmacy administration. He could hardly control his excitement as he learned more about it. It offered everything he wanted, and he wanted it all!

His dream of being a “teacher” came closer to fruition when he was accepted into the pharmacy administration graduate program at the University of Georgia at Athens (UGA). There is a saying that when one door closes another door opens. Such was the case for us. Joe had gone from feeling like an underdog to becoming a Georgia Bulldog and “*How about them DAWGs*” soon became a familiar expression.

Athens, Georgia, holds many wonderful memories for our family. Although we lived on a shoestring budget, our years there were among the happiest we shared. Joe’s major professor, Jeff Kotzan, Ph.D., was both an advisor and friend. It was Jeff who taught Joe the true meaning of red ink! Joe often complained that his papers would come back with bloody corrections and comments such that there was more red ink than black, leaving many works morbidly massacred and others mortally wounded. However, the redder the ink, the harder Joe worked. Writing was always a struggle for him. One of Joe’s favorite stories was when Jeff told him, “*I need words . . . I need words now.*” In response, Joe put an unabridged dictionary on Jeff’s desk with a note that read, “*Here are your words.*” Jeff quickly put the dictionary back on Joe’s desk with a



note that said, “*Now put them in order!*” Jeff still remembers the sound of Joe’s howling laughter echoing down the hall when he read the reply.

Joe thrived in the computer center, watching his data being inhaled, coughed up, and spit out by the mainframe computer dinosaur that existed in the pre-personal computer (PC) era. He felt challenged and invigorated as a graduate student in the bullpen at UGA, where pranks were shared and wonderful friendships flourished. Over time, the red ink disappeared, the words were put in order, and Joe completed his master’s thesis and his Ph.D. while also working as a pharmacist in a community pharmacy and finding time to be a loving husband and father.

It was at the University of Georgia that Joe met the man whom he considered to be his role model, his department chair, Al (Albert) Jowdy, Ph.D. Joe described Dr. Jowdy as a true gentleman, a distinguished mentor, and the ultimate pharmacy educator. Dr. Jowdy supported accepting Joe into the graduate program at UGA despite borderline GRE scores—another risk taker. When he accepted the Distinguished Pharmacy Educator Award, Joe’s admiration of Al was visible as he recognized the contributions of our family, the graduate students, and Al’s mentorship.

Al also lost a battle with cancer in October 2001. His dear wife, Millie, sent me a copy of Al’s eulogy given by their son, Albert. In the eulogy, Albert captured his dad’s infatuation with pharmacy eloquently when he wrote, “More than the science or the business of pharmacy—which he also revered—it was the human connection, the druggist’s care and compassion and knowledge of the patient, that would always remain at the heart of pharmacy for him.”

Dr. Jowdy found particular meaning in the biblical words from Ecclesiastes 3: “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.” During the eulogy, Albert reflected on how Dr. Jowdy would “issue the charge to class after class of pharmacy graduates. He would light a candle, place it on the lectern, and read those timeless words of Ecclesiastes, assuring the new pharmacists that in every season of their lives, even in times of distress and apparent defeat, there was purpose and meaning in the work of their profession.” Anyone who knew Joe can understand how he took to heart these meaningful words from his mentor, how, like Al Jowdy, he developed a true passion for pharmacy.

I spoke with Millie in the last weeks of Al’s life, and she told me that Joe’s outlook and how he had dealt with his cancer had truly affected Al and had given him the courage to accept his own mortality. I have

thought about that conversation many times, and I have been in awe of their soulful relationship. Like an academic father and son, they taught each other much about living and about dying with faith, courage, and dignity.

In the October 1, 2000, issue of the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*, William Zellmer, Deputy Executive Vice President, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, wrote an insightful article on the habits of successful pharmacists. In describing a “successful pharmacist” he wrote, “It means happiness with life in your chosen profession. It means experiencing a sense of joy from professional practice that outweighs the problems that are always there. It means constantly thinking of ways to advance the profession. It means committing yourself to bringing about positive changes in pharmacy practice through whatever avenues are open to you. It means being an ambassador for the profession and speaking up about the good things pharmacists do” (4). Joe was right: Al Jowdy was the ultimate “successful” pharmacist and educator. Joe happily followed in the footsteps of his beloved mentor.

Joe was proud to be a licensed pharmacist and often signed his work “Pharmacist Joseph Wiederholt.” When we would travel around Wisconsin, he would point out the community pharmacies along the way, often recalling the names of the pharmacists who practiced at each location, and we would occasionally stop by to say hello. He was passionate about pharmacy issues and was honored to serve in a consulting role for the Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board and on projects for the Wisconsin Center for Health Systems Research and Analysis, the Wisconsin Bureau of Health Care Financing, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Care Financing Administration. He also served as Chair of the Wisconsin Pharmacy Internship Board. Pharmacy was important to him, and he didn’t hesitate to speak up on behalf of his profession.

### ***SOCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES (SAS)***

Graduation from the University of Georgia was like finally finding the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, the pot of gold being a graduate degree in pharmacy administration. I remember Joe repeating his dad’s response after he called to tell him that he had his Ph.D.: “Congratulations, but remember that you still put your pants on one leg at a time just like everybody else.” Joe took to heart these words of wisdom and al-

ways remembered the importance of humility. He embraced the saying, “Live simply, laugh often, and love much” (author unknown).

Graduation was a difficult concept for our children to grasp. As pre-schoolers, they had been asked by their teachers several times what their daddy did, and they would always answer in a long, southern drawl, “He goes to school, ma’am.” They never understood until they were older why he continued to go to school (albeit as a teacher rather than a student) for the rest of his life. Thank goodness he did.

After interviews and offers, Joe accepted a faculty position in pharmacy administration at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, later named the Department of Social and Administrative Services in Pharmacy. We arrived in Madison in the fall of 1981 and moved into the house that was home for Joe until his death in May of 2001.

The most notable aspect about the pharmacy administration program at Wisconsin in 1981 was a professor by the name of Bob (Doc) Hammel, Ph.D. I remember Joe telling the same story over and over about the bombing of Sterling Hall in August of 1970 during the Vietnam War protests which caused serious damage to the adjacent School of Pharmacy. Joe’s account of the story (as he heard it) was that when guards searched the pharmacy school building for damage, they opened Doc Hammel’s office door and declared the room a disaster area from the explosion. However, a colleague of Bob’s was at the scene and quickly informed the guards that the office suffered no collateral damage at all from the blast. Doc Hammel’s office was that way all of the time! I can still hear Joe’s roaring laughter ringing in my ears when he recited this tale.

The years at Wisconsin were both challenging and rewarding for Joe. The most difficult times were the publish or perish years leading to tenure. Rather than having a narrow focus, Joe tended to be a generalist in his field, pursuing research in marketing, consumer behavior, pharmacy practice and patient-oriented research. In his eyes, the “*P*” in *pharmacy* stood for “*people*.” It was also important for him to teach and mentor graduate students, giving them latitude to learn, grow, and research in areas that interested them. He encouraged students to publish their work and generously shared authorship with them. This generosity and approach broadened the topics on which he published.

Joe also believed strongly in collaborative research, emphasizing the importance of teamwork in social and administrative science. Although his research served his interests well, his nontraditional beliefs made the road to tenure a rocky one to travel. Like the kindergarten child who refused to take a nap, Joe stood by his research beliefs, refusing to take the

path of least resistance. In the end, Joe was granted tenure and went on to become a full professor at the University of Wisconsin.

Joe's determination to stand by his research interests was rewarded by both personal satisfaction and national recognition. In 1988, he was co-recipient of the prestigious Rufus A. Lyman Award for the best paper published in the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* (5). This work was a collaborative effort with colleagues, including his close personal and professional friend, Larry Boh, M.S., who was a clinical professor and "master teacher" at Wisconsin before his own untimely death in February 2001 at the age of 47.

In 1994, Joe was corecipient of the Wintergreen Research Conference III in Social and Administrative Pharmacy Recognition Award for the most noteworthy recent work published in pharmaceutical marketing and management literature. The collaborative project was a team effort with former graduate students Bill Doucette, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Iowa, and Jon Schommer, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Minnesota (6). Joe coauthored another paper with Jon Schommer which was honored with the American Pharmaceutical Association Best Published Paper Award for Economic, Social and Administrative Sciences in 1997 (7). The diversity of Joe's many publications demonstrated the breadth of his research interests in investigating consumer attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and environmental factors related to the purchase and use of drug products and pharmacist services. He was particularly excited when the influence of pharmacy research extended into other disciplines.

Joe thought that Social and Administrative Sciences (SAS), as a relatively young division, was not well understood by many basic scientists. After all, there were no chemicals, no labs, no animals. There was no need for multiple lab assistants and postdoctoral students. "People-oriented" research just didn't seem to fit into the basic science concept of scientific research. Whether as SAS Division Chair or as a faculty member, one of Joe's goals was to change that perception.

Dean Gus Lemberger was instrumental in advancing Social and Administrative Sciences at Wisconsin. He had the foresight and vision to understand that SAS was important for the future of pharmacy research, education, and practice. He supported the growth of the SAS Division, a growth which began during his tenure as dean and continued after his retirement.

A special colleague at Wisconsin who always respected Joe's work and who also recognized the important role of SAS in pharmacy was Charlie (Charles) Sih, Ph.D., a world-renowned biochemist who just

happened to have an office next door to Joe's office. Joe and Charlie became fast friends, sharing morning coffee until the pot became so disgusting that even a chemist could not bear to consume the contents within. By the time the coffee could no longer be safely consumed, a rare and wonderful friendship had blossomed and matured. Joe said that he first met Charlie when a noxious smell from Charlie's lab prompted Joe to go next door and ask Charlie if he needed to buy a canary.

Charlie was well respected within the School of Pharmacy, not only for his research, but also for his insight and genuine concern for the school and the future of pharmacy education. He became one of Joe's closest colleagues and dearest friends. There was a mutual respect between these two very opposite, yet very similar, men. One was a basic scientist while the other was a practical scientist. They listened to one another, offered support, and gave advice. Together they worked to enlighten their respective colleagues, to bring the disciplines to a better understanding of one another, and to build bridges of mutual respect.

Joe focused much of his attention on advancing social and administrative scientific research. He envisioned the creation of a center to support research efforts. Joe worked together with Dean Lemberger and Bill Young, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, to present and gain support for this idea from the Rennebohm Foundation, which had been organized in 1949 by Oscar Rennebohm, owner of the Rennebohm pharmacy chain.

In 1985, the Rennebohm Foundation generously supported the concept and established the Sonderegger Research Center (SRC) in the School of Pharmacy. The research center was named in honor of John L. Sonderegger, a longtime employee and eventual CEO of the Rennebohm Pharmacies until the Rennebohm chain was sold to Walgreens (8). The Sonderegger Research Center was a dream come true for Joe and his colleagues, and it was the first research center of its kind. As an interdisciplinary research center, the SRC has advanced social and administrative scientific research, supporting Joe's practice philosophy which focused on patient-centered research initiatives.

The Pharmaceutical Care Outcomes: The Patient Role (PCOPR) investigative research team was a prime example of this interdisciplinary research, work that continues today. Funded by a \$2 million grant from the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, the multidisciplinary team consisted of pharmacy faculty and staff from the Sonderegger Research Center and physicians and nurses from the medical school Rheumatology Section in collaboration with the Department of Biostatistics. Their team approach on the concordance concept in patient

medication management was published in the June 2001 issue of the *International Journal of Pharmacy Practice* (9). Although two authors, Joe and Larry Boh, both died before the article was in print, their memory lives on in their work and the work of their colleagues.

### TRIPS TO NEPTUNE

In 1987, a conference was held for pharmacy administration faculty and graduate students in the Midwest titled, "Changing Health Care Environment: Its Impact on Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Industry." As program chair and the instigator for the conference, Joe's goals were "*to foster dialogue between pharmacy administration faculty and industry through issue-oriented small group workshops whereby each would gain a better understanding of the other in terms of interests, needs, contributions, and concerns for the future; and to reach consensus, where possible, in defining issues that need further investigation and in identifying possible research agendas.*" Again, the concept of teamwork comes to mind, but on a broader scale.

Throughout his career, Joe was genuinely interested not only in innovative ideas at the University of Wisconsin, but also in the concept of collaboration with colleagues at other universities. This interest fostered the formation of an informal research group of colleagues from Wisconsin, Michigan, and Purdue who strived for the advancement and enhancement of scientific research. The group included Dave Kreling, Ph.D. (Wisconsin), Frank Ascione, Ph.D. (Michigan), Duane Kirking, Ph.D. (Michigan), Holly Mason, Ph.D. (Purdue), and Steve Schondelmeyer, Ph.D. (formerly of Purdue; now at the University of Minnesota). They named the group the Consortium on Research in Administrative Pharmacy, adopting the acronym CRAP. The participants identified themselves, of course, as the "Crappers." Joe felt very confident that CRAP would continue for many years among his "distinguished" colleagues.

During his illness, Joe received a copy of the book *Ripples of Joy* from Duane Kirking. The book was coauthored by Duane's sister, Cheryl, who was also a contributing author to the best-selling *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. In the preface of the book, Cheryl tells the reader: "Imagine you are standing by a clear, placid pond. In your hand you hold a smooth, round stone. As you wrap your fingers around it, think of the many things for which you are grateful: your friends, family, health, good food, the beauty of nature . . . Let the stone represent



your gratitude. Now imagine tossing it into the pond. Watch the ripples emanate, each ripple creating another.”

Drop a stone into the water  
And in a moment it is gone  
But a hundred ripples circle on and on and on

Cheryl Kirking (11)

Cheryl wrote a personal message in Joe’s book noting that Duane called him a “ripplemaker.” I understand what he meant. Joe’s gratitude for all that life had to offer was obvious in his daily living and his daily teaching. He reminded his students of another favorite quote by an unknown author: “Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery; today is a gift, that’s why they call it the present.” This may well be the most valuable lesson he taught the students under his mentorship, lessons that his graduate students will hopefully teach their students and their students will teach the generations to follow, as “a hundred ripples circle on and on and on.”

Joe was clear about his teaching philosophy for graduate students. *“In teaching graduate students I assume the role of mentor and the student the mentee. I teach students the value of conducting research based upon theory and empirical evidence. I teach and challenge students to be creative and innovative, to develop skills to conduct original research, to develop a stream of research within their area of expertise, to pursue scholarship, and to seek funding for their work. Lastly, I teach a graduate student about his/her role as a scientist and teacher in society.”*

Joe was nicknamed “Neptune” several years ago. This name was derived from his timeless efforts to motivate his graduate students and to take them to new levels of thinking, to reach far beyond their initial aspirations. Earlene Lipowski, Joe’s first Ph.D. student, now an associate professor at the University of Florida, captured the essence of this motivation by saying that he encouraged them to “take a trip to Neptune . . . to play ‘what if’ and to challenge each others logic” (10). The only rule about a trip to Neptune, as Joe explained it to me, was that no one was wrong when expressing ideas; there were no boundaries.

The “Neptune” table was a simple round conference table that sat in Joe’s office. I believe that he chose the shape purposefully because a round table represents equality. All who gathered around to share ideas came as equal participants and were treated respectfully on the trips to



Neptune. Treating graduate students with respect was a key factor in achieving the high intellectual standards of excellence that Joe expected from them in return.

Dave Kreling, Ph.D., reminded me that the Neptune experience also often occurred one-on-one between Joe and a graduate student, “using a pad of paper as a pallet to capture hen scratchings of copious and wonderful notes,” as ideas flowed freely. Dave described Joe’s chalkboard as “a crazy quilt of words, symbols and hieroglyphics that captured and chronicled the ideas of the Neptune mission.” Graduate students were Joe’s extended family. He knew that it was they who would continue to move forward with new ideas long after he was gone.

At his funeral, Joe’s colleague, Betty Chewning, Ph.D., spoke of the special teacher/student relationships that Joe had developed. Directing her comments to his graduate students, she said, “. . . you know what it meant to talk with your mentor, Joe . . . to blue sky with him at that old round table in his office. The ideas would fly faster than words . . . verbs became irrelevant, in fact words became irrelevant and together you went to Neptune and beyond to a place that only ideas mattered. He was always so enthusiastic about ideas . . . never imposing his own. Thinking outside the box hardly describes Joe Wiederholt’s mind. It was a wildly creative mind matched with a selfless, generous soul. The results were conversations that led to whole new ways of conceptualizing marketing, pharmacy, patient behavior, the School of Pharmacy, courses . . . professional organizations . . . whatever you were talking about.”

The Neptune table now sits in the Sonderegger Research Center in the SAS Division of the new School of Pharmacy. I know that there will be many more thought-provoking trips in the future as faculty and students gather around the table. However, I believe that with Joe’s spiritual guidance those trips will truly reach far beyond Neptune. There will be no limits to the imagination and to the possibilities of discovery.

Joe was recognized by his peers for his dedication to teaching, for his research, and for his service to his profession through many honors and awards. He would not approve of a laundry list of his achievements, but a few deserve special recognition. He was named a fellow of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy and the American Association of Pharmaceutical Sciences. The coveted 2000 Distinguished Pharmacy Educator Award presented to him by AACP was truly a highlight of his career. The award was described in one news article as the “Nobel Prize” for a pharmacy educator. It certainly meant that much to Joe. Finally, he was the recipient of the 2001 Creighton University Presidential Citation, the first pharmacist to receive this honor. He was most

grateful to all of the individuals who made such unimaginable dreams a reality for just an *average Joe*.

The list of accomplishments, honors, and awards goes on and on. And yet, when you would ask Joe what he had done in his career, he would humbly reply that he hadn't done that much. Perhaps it was because when you travel to Neptune you see that there is so much more yet to do, so many more ideas to pursue, so many more papers to write.

### ***THE COURAGE TO TEACH***

Although universities are most notable for research activities, Joe was not shy about reminding his colleagues that the pharmacy school existed because of the undergraduate pharmacy students. "*They are pharmacy and don't let anyone forget it,*" he told me more than once while shaking a pointed finger in my direction as I sat attentively as an innocent sounding block. He was so very sincere about this because pharmacy students truly held a special place in his heart. They lit up his life. He considered it an honor to teach pharmacy students. Of all the prestigious awards and honors that Joe received, none were more special than the seven teaching awards given to him by the students themselves.

In the introduction of the book *The Courage to Teach*, Parker J. Palmer writes, "I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy. When my students and I discover uncharted territory to explore, when the pathway out of a thicket opens up before us, when our experience is illuminated by the lightning-life of the mind—when teaching is the finest work I know." Of course, Palmer is describing the "good days" and then goes on to add that this particular book is for teachers who have good days and bad ones, but more importantly for teachers who on the bad days "refuse to harden their hearts because they love learners, learning, and the teaching life" (12).

I think of Joe each time I read these particular passages, especially the phrases "I can hardly hold the joy" and "because they love learners, learning, and the teaching life." I can remember several times when colleagues and students alike have told me how Joe's excitement about teaching was so visibly contagious. I know firsthand how much he loved the learners, the learning, and the teaching life.

Joe's excitement was exemplified many times in the classroom setting. What a character he could be, wanting so much to reach out to the

students, to get them excited about learning, about pharmacy. I remember being told about the first time he stood up on a desk and started lecturing to get the students' attention. This was most noteworthy because the incident occurred right before Robin Williams did the same thing in his starring role in *The Dead Poet's Society*. Some of the students expressed pride at the time that "Professor Wiederholt did it first!"

Not long after we arrived in Madison, one of the graduating classes roasted Joe, mimicking his constant hand gestures. It was true: the more excited he got, the more animated he became. Our family often joked that Joe wouldn't be able to talk if we tied up his hands. Graduate students had their stories about how Joe would wander around the lecture hall with his microphone cord dangling when lecturing to the undergrads. He would wander and wander and wander until they would have to start literally reeling him in. "I can hardly hold the joy."

Joe's teaching philosophy for professional students was to treat them as professional students. *"In teaching pharmacy students I strive: to teach students knowledge in the field of pharmacy administration based on theoretical and empirical research; to improve students' problem solving analytical and decision making skills through laboratory simulations and exercises; to improve students' communication skills requiring students to prepare and submit written assignments and make oral presentations to colleagues; to challenge students to think independently; and to instill in students their responsibilities to the patient as a pharmacist."*

I can remember Joe chuckling sheepishly when students took one of his classes thinking it would be "easy" compared to the hard-core science requirements. To their surprise, they often found the class one of the most difficult because they couldn't memorize equations and facts. Instead, they were challenged to *think* independently and to *communicate* effectively.

Joe proudly served as a faculty advisor for the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Pharmaceutical Association Academy of Students of Pharmacy for 18 years. He felt that his role as advisor was just that, an advisor. He provided guidance but expected the students to assume the leadership for their organization. He was not disappointed in their performance. The student chapter earned the National Certificate of Recognition five times and the National Achievement Award six times during his years as advisor. I remember being at a ceremony at APhA when one of the awards was announced. It was like watching a team winning the national trophy. In fact, that's just what it was. Joe shared in the screams, the tears, and the joy when the students won. However, he

was proud of them whether they won an award or not because he knew that the students were always winners in his eyes, and they knew it too.

The students were the driving force behind Joe's well-known Snoopy™ ties. When he first arrived in Madison as a young faculty member with little financial reserve, Joe's ties were somewhat tacky. Actually they were extremely lame. When he received his teaching evaluations from the students, the recurring comment was that he was a great teacher, but his ties, in the students' words, "sucked." My response was, "I told you so."

Shortly thereafter, Joe's sister sent him his first Snoopy Joe Cool™ tie for Christmas. When he wore it to class, it was an instant success, and a new tradition was born. The rest is history. He collected every Snoopy tie he could find. Students quickly hopped on the bandwagon and even conducted Internet searches looking for the infamous ties. Before long, Snoopy was everywhere. This wonderful beagle captured the essence of Joe's personality so perfectly. It made students and colleagues smile, and their smiles made Joe happy.

### **TEACHER UNTIL THE END**

On September 5, 1994, Joe experienced the first symptoms that led to the diagnosis of colon cancer. It was the day of his 45th birthday. Since Joe had always been very health conscious, it was shocking news. Having lost my father to colon cancer just a few years prior, we were both devastated. Once the diagnosis was made, he underwent surgery and within weeks was started on chemotherapy. The second-year pharmacy school students made Joe a wonderful banner that they each signed with personal well-wishes. We hung the banner across our kitchen wall, and it remained there throughout the year he was on chemotherapy. He was so touched by this simple gesture from the students he loved so dearly. When I first hung the banner, he sat for the longest time looking at it and then quietly said, "*I can deal with the uncertainty of the future and I can handle the side effects of chemotherapy, but I can't imagine not being able to teach.*" It was the first time since receiving the news of his diagnosis that he cried.

The transition from teacher and pharmacist to patient was not an easy one at first. It gave Joe an entirely new perspective on patient/consumer-oriented practice and research. Of course, Joe refused to be a passive pawn of the medical system. Instead, he quickly became a responsible partner in his own care, put on his teaching (Snoopy) cap, and

turned his learning experiences as a patient into teaching tools for patients, educators, and pharmacy students.

First, he developed a side-effect monitoring instrument for himself based on a pain scale that was used during his postoperative recovery. This helped track symptoms of chemotherapy, allowing him to communicate better with his oncologist, to facilitate treatment options, and to improve his quality of life. It gave him some control over his life. *"You just don't know what it means to have some feeling of control in your life when you're on chemotherapy,"* he said.

Second, he translated his experiences as a cancer patient into a case study for pharmacy educators. This effort began in the summer of 1995 when Joe was ending his year as chair-elect of the AACP Section of Teachers of Social and Administrative Programs in Pharmacy Administration. At the annual convention in Philadelphia, the opening session was titled "Pharmaceutical Care, the Lost Patient." He asked me to attend a presentation that he was doing at the session, and I complied. To my total surprise, he presented a case study about George, a cancer patient, and Ruth, his wife and patient advocate. The presentation reviewed the multitude of problems, decisions, and overwhelming information confronting George and Ruth, concentrating on drug therapies (polypharmacy) and side-effect monitoring. To the surprise of most of the audience, Joe revealed in the end that George and Ruth were Joe and Peg.

After the presentation at AACP, Joe and I wrote "The Patient: Our Teacher and Friend," which captured in greater detail our experiences as we traveled the journey through the diagnosis and treatment of Joe's cancer (13). The article emphasized the challenges confronting pharmacy educators in preparing students for the interdisciplinary, patient-centered role that awaits them in clinical practice. The article also highlighted the simple side-effect monitoring tool that Joe created for his personal use during chemotherapy. These efforts soon led to case study presentations for undergraduate pharmacy students at the University of Wisconsin. During the lectures, Joe shared his personal experiences as a cancer patient and emphasized the important role that the students must play as professional pharmacists in side-effect monitoring and patient counseling. Many students told me that this was the most meaningful lecture they have ever had.

Joe's side-effect monitoring system soon culminated in one of his most prized accomplishments. Working with Doctors and Designers, Inc., in conjunction with Bristol-Meyers Squibb, he helped develop a personal health care tracking program in the form of *The WriteTrack*, an educational book and diary for patients undergoing cancer treatments

(14). The initial 100,000 copies of *The WriteTrack* were published and distributed with the support of Cancer Care, Inc. A second printing was required to meet the overwhelming demand. When Joe's cancer recurred in 1999, he became a patient again and experienced firsthand the value of *The WriteTrack*. More importantly, he witnessed other oncology patients using the book. The sense of satisfaction this gave him was expressed in one word, "Wow!"

After Joe was diagnosed with cancer in 1994, he started baking chocolate chip cookies as a thank you to those who had been so kind to us. Soon the cookies made their way into the classroom as a treat for students on the day of their final exam. Before long, boxes of cookies were sent to colleagues who were promoted or who received an award. Each cookie was baked by Joe with special care and attention to detail, never letting chemotherapy stand in the way of a determined chef. Each cookie represented yet another lesson from a special teacher . . . a lesson about the importance of saying thank you, good luck, congratulations, or good job, the importance of caring about people.

### **THE GREAT PUMPKIN**

When Joe addressed his colleagues at the 2000 AACP meeting, the title of his talk was, "The Great Pumpkin: Patient Concordance with Drug Therapy." A week before his death, our son asked him to explain the meaning of the talk. It was one of the most sincere and heart-wrenching discussions of his last days.

*"Lucy never believed in the Great Pumpkin . . . it never comes! Linus believed . . . but he didn't really believe all the way . . . Snoopy always believed in the Great Pumpkin so he was always excited that it was coming . . . always. Lucy told Snoopy it would never come. Linus would always think it 'might' come, so they would all wait on Halloween . . . and it would never come. So the moral of the story is that if you don't really believe, it won't come.*

*My talk was strictly down at the patient level . . . patient needs . . . and if we don't as pharmacy educators start addressing those needs as pharmacists, somebody else will and the Great Pumpkin will never come for pharmacy to be involved . . . I guess no matter how hard as pharmacists we work to understand the pharmacology and the chemistry and all of that stuff, you still have to translate it so patients use it and understand it. We do a good job by working with physicians and health care policy makers . . . but we can do a much better job working with pa-*



*tients and being there for patients who really want to get involved with their therapy . . . to really be their advocates and help them at a very basic level. That starts with caring and learning how to care and how to help them manage their medications so they feel functional and comfortable. And I think if we work with patients, sooner or later they'll educate other people to the value of that [pharmacy] and you'll have some type of consensus among patients and people will move in that direction. That's what we need in health care . . . and I was able to see it through my disease . . . You have to have direct contact with patients on a daily basis so you can see what their problems are . . . so you can take those problems and challenge students on how to solve them . . . to meet their [patient] needs . . . and students will do it. They'll develop systems."* Like Snoopy, Joe always believed the Great Pumpkin will come for pharmacy . . . always!

Joe's last lecture to family and colleagues gathered around his bed was about paperclips. He had visions of paperclips. When asked what they meant, he responded that *although people pay attention to the first paper clip, it is the second paper clip that is important*. When I asked him why that was, he said that *it is the second paperclip that holds us together when the first one can no longer do it*. The message to me was clear. Joe was the first paperclip. In his absence, we must serve as the second paperclip, each in our own way . . . to hold it all together.

I will always remember how when asked by strangers what he did, Joe never said that he had a Ph.D. or that he was a professor. He always answered humbly but proudly, *"I am a teacher."* And so he was. Joe Wiederholt was truly a teacher to the end.

### GOING BEYOND

Joe often used Henry Adams' quote, "A teacher affects eternity, you never know when his/her influence stops." With this in mind, I can't help but recall his comments and teaching pearls as the AACP 2000 Distinguished Pharmacy Educator of the Year.

*As a pharmacy educator, your success by whatever measure is attributed to the nurturing, interacting and collaborating with people. I gratefully share this award with those people and offer you some teaching pearls related to students, instruction and leadership.*



## ***Teaching Pearls***

### *Students*

- Challenge students to think and witness innovation.
- Treat students with respect and you will earn their trust.
- Use discipline and structure “PRN” (as needed) because students desire it.
- Offer constructive criticism in a positive way and watch students grow.
- Combine expectations for performance with tools to achieve them.

### *Instruction*

- Develop a passion for what you teach; it energizes students to listen and learn.
- Be prepared when you take the stage of instruction.
- Use data and real world examples in the classroom to make a subject come alive.
- Learn how to say “I don’t know,” then seek the answer.
- Share your efforts and ideas through scholarship.

### *Leadership*

- Lead by your example.
- Dream to create your vision and define your goals.
- Listen with an open mind.
- Take risks and watch opportunities appear.
- Commit to excellence and quality is assured.
- Build communication bridges and problem solving through humility and selflessness.
- Maintain your integrity and be rewarded with trust and respect.
- Smile and laugh often to make teaching and learning fun.
- Mentor the next generation of educators for they hold the key to the future.

*An educator’s wealth is measured by the richness of relationships with students and colleagues. Pharmacy educators are amongst the wealthiest people on Earth.*

When colleagues or students wonder where to go now, the answer is a simple one, really. Joe would say with a big smile, twinkling eyes, and overwhelming excitement, “*There are no boundaries. Take a trip to Neptune . . . and then go beyond!*”

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