

Robert G. Dicus Award Acceptance Address

Mark A. Anderson 2019

Thank you for that very kind ovation. And thank you, Sandy, for your kind words and for your tireless service representing the Section so well. I am humbled to accept this very special award and to stand before you, my associates and friends for whom I have the highest regard.

When I received a voice message from the President of the Private Practice Section, I was obviously curious as to the purpose. Is she is calling about a special project or a new committee assignment? Or, could this be a "Foundation call"? Having just finished a tour of duty for the Government Affairs Committee, I was exploring in my mind what some of the possible options could be. After a little telephone tag, we finally connected. Following some small talk, I asked Sandy what I could do for her. She answered very matter-of-factly, "Mark we would like you to give a speech at our Fall Conference." Considering my aversion to public speaking, my stomach turned and I suddenly felt lightheaded. I asked, "Sandy why in the world would you want me to give a speech?" She replied, "because you are being honored with the Robert G. Dicus Award". As I attempted to process what she said, I had a difficult time finding enough air in my lungs to respond. Obviously, I was so surprised that I don't recall what I said from that point on other than asking a couple times if she was sure the award was intended for me.

Since that memorable conversation, I have spent a great deal of time coming to grips with the magnitude of this great honor. I truly recognize the responsibility I now bear to live up to the wonderful men and women who have preceded me and the qualifications and values of the Robert G. Dicus Award. "Very Humbling" is the best way to describe my feelings.

To my dear friend Brian who took the time to nominate me; and to those who wrote letters of support; to the Awards Committee for their recommendation and to the

PPS Board of Directors for their approval, I thank you. It means so much to receive your votes of confidence.

It is indeed an amazing honor to accept this award and to be invited to join the ranks of the esteemed past Dicus Award recipients. I have had the opportunity to personally know many of these individuals and consider them my friends. I have great admiration for their contributions to our Section and to our profession. Receiving an award from your peers for doing something that you love, and that occupies the majority of your waking hours, is an incredible feeling.

I would like to first express my gratitude and love to my wife Georgia for her unwavering support. She is my confidant and my inspiration. I have been so blessed to have her constantly at my side throughout this journey. I would like to recognize the sacrifices that all of our partners make on our behalf as we pursue our dreams of successful physical therapy businesses. As for me, I would not be here today without Georgia.

I would also like to thank our kids for their support over all of these years. We have gone from our kids scooting around on treatment stools after hours in the clinic to now having grandkids running around the business office. Georgia and I were so excited to have the kids join us here in Orlando for this event. The Kids were also very excited until they realized it was in the middle of the week with Halloween coming up tomorrow night. So, we have planned to celebrate at home along with 2 new grandbabies that arrived earlier this month. That brings the grand total to the lucky number 13. I am a very lucky man!

In some ways I feel like receiving this award may be akin to receiving an Oscar for Best Picture. Every award-winning movie starts with a great story. Although I may be the holding the Dicus Award (Oscar) this evening, there are a bunch of people who have played major roles in the direction, production, support and financing of my story. If this were the Oscars, I would have many of you standing at my side tonight sharing in the recognition you so deserve.

Every great movie has its leading and supporting actors and Director. I would like to thank our remarkable Mountain Land shareholders, partners and officers who are here tonight: Brian White, Rick Lybbert, Nylin Johnson and Bob Farrell. And thanks also to many of our clinic partners who are joining us here at PPS. When I am attending association meetings or events, these team members are minding the ranch back home and supporting my involvement with lobbying or the other numerous projects that I am involved with. For over 25 years we have worked together and shared a dream of creating a Legacy Physical Therapy Company. This team has helped create an environment where entrepreneurial therapists can achieve their clinical goals as well as have ownership in a practice. I am a very lucky man to be a part of a team with this kind of talent, understanding and support.

I have made some incredible friends in our Private Practice Section. I would be remiss without thanking my partners in the P.T. 1 group. You know who you are and I hope you know how much your friendship and support mean to me. These are lifelong friendships that have stood the test of time.

I would like to share with you a story about my introduction to the PPS that started 28 years ago. The story takes place in the Hilton Towers Ballroom in Chicago, Illinois in November of 1992. This is the ballroom that has hosted Kings and Presidents. That night the hall was filled with Private Practice Physical Therapists all dressed to the nines and uniformed waiters marching through the hall serving flaming Baked Alaska. Ernie Burch, President of Private Practice Section, eloquently introduced Jack Close as the 11th recipient of the Robert G. Dicus award. It was followed by a standing ovation and then a long but vibrant acceptance speech by Jack. He acknowledged Shirley Dicus and two of her children who were attending that great event. I knew enough about Jack Close and his practice in Las Vegas, Nevada to know that he was the real deal. Jack and his partner had a reputation as being exceptional Private Practice P.Ts. They were honest and they were clinically progressive and most of all they were very successful.

As a young wide-eyed P.T. from Utah, I had never been served by uniformed waiters in a ballroom where U.S. Presidents had dined. And I sure as heck hadn't eaten a dessert that was on fire! (Unless you count marshmallows on sticks over a campfire.) This whole event seemed bigger than life. I didn't have much of an idea who Robert Dicus was but I quickly learned that he was a very important figure to this group and that he was a man of action and conviction. I learned of his profound impact on who we were as "Self Employed" P.Ts. He and his colleagues had paved the way for our success. They had fought the battles one by one to provide us with the privilege and ability to practice independently. He, with a select few, created this Section that brings us together tonight and gives us the ability to network and collaborate, to learn business skills and in the long run to improve the care of our patients.

After three days of attending classes and meeting other therapists with similar ambitions and challenges, I was hooked. The Private Practice Section was a part of APTA that I wanted to be involved with. I went back to Utah stoked on all of the things I had learned. I found myself sharing information with anyone in our company who would lend an ear. I can probably count on one hand the number of PPS fall conferences I have missed since those rainy days in Chicago in 1992.

I believe one who receives the Dicus Award has a responsibility to share a few pearls of wisdom with their audience. I would like to take a few minutes to talk to you as peers about the importance of Mentoring. I am a product of many mentors taking me under their wing and teaching me. They are the ones that cared enough to give me advice as I have gone down the path.

Throughout my PT career I have always looked to role models to help me plot my course and create my story. All of us have had "influencers" in our careers. These are people that through their willingness to share their knowledge and experiences have made a difference in how we act and what we do. These influencers become mentors when they show they care.

For me, my first Business Mentor was my first P.T. boss and the man who helped me get into P.T. school. His name was Don Wortley. Don was an industrious Private Practice Physical Therapist who had developed a large practice including Hospital and Nursing Home contracts and outpatient clinics. Don gave countless hours of service to the Utah Chapter and to the APTA. He served as the 25th President of the APTA during the late 70's and early 80's. Don was a truly caring person that loved to help people but he was also a no-nonsense guy. One of Don's sayings was, "**Lead me, follow me or get the hell out of the way**". From Don's example I learned in business you can't stand still and that there is no room for complacency. You're either growing or you're dying. It is your choice. Don was definitely not much of a look back guy. Through his example I learned the importance of being a visionary and always thinking of how to improve what we are doing.

After working for Don for seven years as a student and as a therapist, I decided it was time to spread my wings and fly on my own. So, I opened my first outpatient practice in Park City, Utah. Taking 100% of the responsibility for every element of a clinical practice and making sure the paychecks wouldn't bounce was not a role for the faint of heart. Being self-employed turned a forty-hour work week into an eighty-hour work week. I'm sure you can all relate. It was at that time that I realized how much I had been mentored by Don and the many other therapists in his organization. I was truly grateful and continued to reach out to Don for advice when I was facing challenges.

Another trait I learned in those first years of Practice was a willingness to take chances. Wayne Gretzky said "**you miss 100% of the shots you don't take**". I learned early on that when opportunity comes knocking, you take action! Obviously not all opportunities are good ones however, and I hate to admit how many shots I took that fell way short of the goal. We laugh about some of those mistakes now, but at the time they were very traumatic.

Don Wortley's involvement with the APTA inspired me to be active in the Utah Chapter. I realized that serving on committees and later the Chapter board had me

rubbing shoulders with some remarkable role models. I learned that these colleagues in the chapter were facing the same challenges that I was. They were always willing to share advice as well as war stories. Some of my closest friends today are those who I was able serve with some thirty years ago.

By far the most important trait I learned from Don was having an “*abundance mentality*”. Don said having a very good therapist open an office across the street from you is one of the best things that could happen. Quality inspires quality and good therapy helps all practices. As I look at my career and the times that I have enjoyed the most success, it has inevitably been the times I have worn the abundance mentality hat. There is an abundance of opportunities and an abundance of talented therapists who can strengthen and grow our profession.

During the past 28 years I have loved the fellowship and the comradery that PPS members have given me. I believe in the principle “*if you want to be successful, surround yourself with people who are smarter than you*”. PPS gives us that opportunity to surround ourselves with really smart people. There are so many great role models and examples in this Section. It is reassuring to know that if I have a question about anything from Medicare Compliance to Employee Benefits, there are several people in the Section that will have an answer or at least an opinion. Everyone you meet at PPS can be a potential life line and resource.

The example set by past Dicus Award recipients and others has influenced my career in so many ways. I often think of Jayne Snider’s tenacity in her lobbying efforts on the hill. Or Peter McMenemy’s distain for referral for profit. I have even followed Michael Winapper’s and Helene Fearon’s example of starting a therapy network. PPS has been a “Convenience Store” for solutions and great ideas.

Most of the people that I have mentioned tonight have had an influence on my life as mentors, either intentionally or unintentionally. They may not have realized it at the time, but I was watching and I was listening. If these individuals can have that

kind of influence unintentionally, just think what we can accomplish if we make mentoring a conscious part of our daily workplace.

Because of the impact role models and mentors have had on my life, I have made it a habit to look for mentoring opportunities to help others be successful. It may be a young therapist, a student or someone that I just think has hutzpah. I love the opportunity to pass on the lessons I have learned or the experiences I have had which might help someone shape their own success. Building others up allows us to stand with them.

At Mountain Land Rehabilitation we have seen mentoring success with students and techs who want to become physical therapists. We have many individuals who have stayed with us throughout their education or have come back to us as PTs because of their mentor relationships while with our company. I am honored that two of my partners that are here tonight have traveled that path. Having grown up in our business from aide to a partner gives them great insight. We are a much better company because of them.

My Challenge for each of you tonight is to give back to this remarkable profession that has given us our dream jobs. If you have been the recipient of great men and women who have mentored you, choose to look for opportunities to pass it on! While here at the conference, find some first-time attendees or a new member and share your business card. Take the opportunity to network. The meetings that happen in the halls at lunch and between sessions may provide the biggest “pearls” that you will take home from the conference. Don’t just attend PPS fall conference, get involved. Look for opportunities to serve on Section Committees or better yet run for office. Read the Impact Magazine and Section mailings. Sign up for PPS webinars. Participate in the PPS sponsored Peer to Peer program and the KPI Benchmarking. Share things that are going right and listen closely to the advice and experiences of others. Get engaged!

The practice of physical therapy and my involvement in our Association has opened many doors of opportunity which have changed my life. Who would have thought I would have explored therapy business opportunities in China or that I would find myself speaking on Private Practice concepts to the Philippine Physical Therapy Association? Who would have thought that my interest in P.T. Advocacy would have me skiing with Mitt and Ann Romney and going to their cabin for lunch? And most recently, who would have thought I would be spending time in Iraq refugee camps teaching Kurdish technicians to fit wheelchairs? These opportunities have all presented themselves because I am a Private Practice Physical Therapist.

Whether traveling through the desert of Iraq, mentoring a new grad or treating your last patient of the day before running out to see your daughter's soccer match, we are all part of an amazing profession. It is our obligation to foster, protect and advance Private Practice Physical Therapy. It is our responsibility to prepare and mentor the next generation of Private Practice owners. Building community, advancing our profession and improving the health of society is our mission.

There are so many great examples around us. Choose to be one of them!

Thank you again for this wonderful award. It is something that I will remember and cherish the rest of my life.

“When you do nothing you feel overwhelmed and powerless. But when you get involved you feel the sense of hope and accomplishment that comes from knowing you are working to make things better.”

Maya Angelou