

Adieu, Bill

Linda Poloway

We all anticipated that life would not remain the same for CSHP in the 21st century, and, indeed, the Society has already experienced its first major change. Bill Leslie has left the organization after serving as its Executive Director for 12 years. Significant changes have occurred within the Society during those years, and we are thankful to Bill for having helped us through them.

Bill accepted the position of Executive Director on July 4, 1988. Having served as Director of Finance for the previous 2 years, Bill was familiar with the issues facing CSHP and the needs of the membership. He had been practising in a hospital environment and, at the time of his appointment, was Manager of Pharmacy Services at York Finch Hospital in Downsview, Ontario.

Change is not new to Bill Leslie. In fact, his term as Executive Director began with a change in the location of the CSHP office from Toronto to Ottawa. Bill accepted the challenge from Council to relocate the office and successfully rebuilt the Society's operations in the new city. As the only staff member to relocate, Bill was responsible for interviewing and hiring for all the other positions and then for providing the new staff members with adequate training for their work in supporting the numerous activities of the Society. This transition was exceptionally smooth, with minimal disruptions in the provision of member services and Council support.

A significant initiative in maintaining CSHP's presence in Quebec drew on Bill's expertise. He was instrumental in drafting the Memorandum of Understanding with the Association des pharmaciens d'établissements de santé du Québec (APES). Bill's strength in dealing with external organizations was noteworthy in this endeavour. His diplomacy, ability to present historical facts of relevance, and "soft-sell approach" all assisted in framing CSHP as a worthy partner to the APES.

Bill had his finger on the pulse of government in relation to pharmacy practice and was frequently at the table, representing the Society in policy or practice discussions. Joint initiatives with the Canadian Pharmacists Association were fuelled by Bill's relationship with that organization and his desire to see the 2 organizations collaborate toward a common good. Industry support for CSHP can be linked in no small part to Bill's influence.

Responses to Bill's tenure at CSHP by several past-presidents have consistently portrayed an Executive Director who had the best interests of the Society at heart. He was described as the "point man" who made things happen. Council, Executive, committees, and task forces continually put forward new ideas that have resulted in enhanced value for the membership, and the link between the idea and the tangible result was often Bill Leslie. Recent initiatives in which Bill played a major role were the direct patient care modules, the seamless care workshop, and the offering of liability insurance to members.

Just as consistent was the support Bill provided to Council and, in particular, to the Executive Officers. He was always there for consultation and could be relied on for a historical perspective, direction at Council meetings, and general guidance. Bill offered his advice and support when required, but he always deferred to the President, however new to the position that person was. The President, as elected head of the organization, was always presented by Bill as the leader of the Society. Bill provided the "behind-the-scenes" support. Presidential Officers change and the continuity of the Society would be at stake if not for an effective Executive Director. Bill was



Bill Leslie

that steadfast common denominator. When the portfolio structure of the Executive Officers changed, requiring the Executive Director to communicate with and support 3 Presidential Officers (instead of just the President) on an on-going basis, Bill managed the change with little apparent effort. Bill Leslie has also been identified as an excellent resource for our members, our Branch delegates, and the members of the numerous task forces and committees. He was occasionally known to “give the long answer to the short question”, but his support was highly valued. Bill, always a good sport, was willing to laugh at himself as well as laughing with others.

One of the surprising things about Bill was the modesty with which he spoke of his contributions. He downplayed his role and accentuated that of the

elected Society officials. He praised the continuing, outstanding volunteerism of our Society and identified our members as the biggest contributors.

It is now time to hail the value that Bill has brought to our Society. He has played a major role in helping our Society to achieve its current status as a credible, highly productive, member-oriented organization. Those of us who know Bill well are familiar with his penchant for fine, single-malt Scotch. We toast you, Bill, with this “virtual” finest of all Scotch liquors, and offer a humble “thank you” for all you have given to CSHP.

Linda Poloway, BScPharm, FCSHP, is President of CSHP.

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