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Keeping the Dream Alive: The Back Story

Elbert D. Glover

Retired, glover@glover.family

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Abstract

The purpose of the manuscript was to share the unfamiliar back story of the founding of The Academy. Noted is the unique dilemma and unforeseen obstacles the founder had to overcome to launch The Academy. The dream began with the recognition that most universities waged enormous lip service to quality teaching, however, handsomely rewarded research rarely teaching. Consequently, to overcome his own research limitations, the founder set upon forming a research organization to coalesce with researchers. Detailed is the negative feedback received from colleagues regarding forming The Academy and how he overcame his personal research limitations. The manuscript further notes how the initial founders were recruited, how gender criticism was dealt with, how the bylaws were established, how the meeting venues were selected and how The Academy narrowly missed being a conceivable casualty of 9/11. Similarly, thoughts are offered for keeping The Academy dream alive via the paramount Academy feature; *meritocracy*. Moreover, further comments are offered regarding Academy admission requirements, prevailing awards within The Academy, the short-lived official journal of The Academy and the limitation of membership. The overall tone is the recognition that organizations grow and change; however, the founder emboldens The Academy to *always* keep in mind the founding principles that make The Academy unique and distinct from other health organizations.

Keywords

AAHB history, Academy dreams, research, Academy recommendations

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Keeping the Dream Alive: The Back Story

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.

Harriet Tubman

A swift glimpse in the rear-view mirror, allows me to gradually reflect upon my academic career as it slowly dips below the horizon. Twilight appears to be consuming my achievements as father time is swiftly unpacking and dismembering my grants, publications, presentations and research, all soon to be forgotten. Colleagues will quickly disregard my existence which is painful as a small portion of me cannot help but die. Conversely, life is transitory, nonetheless, am personally elevated by the one accomplishment that should endure in perpetuity, an unimaginable professional accomplishment; the founding of the American Academy of Health Behavior (The Academy) (McDermott & Glover, 2010; Laflin & Black, 2003).

Never in my wildest uneventful youthful dreams could I have envisioned that one day that my early arrogant recalcitrant childhood behavior to never walk in anyone's shadow would result in the founding of a national research organization; the very thought would have been preposterous. Nonetheless, implausible dreams do happen! I have discovered that the impossible is not possible till someone achieves it, thereafter, it is deemed obviously possible. Today, The Academy is slowly seeping into the academic ground water and now the loftier dream is that one day all health behavior researchers will consume The Academy water. The loftier dream is that The Academy blooms to become the organization that all quality health behavior researchers regardless of discipline turn to for their personal growth.

One who walks in another's tracks leaves no footprints.

Italian Proverb

However, nothing great is accomplished alone. I may have been the dreamer as I was headed where my dreams would take me; however, along the way, this dream could not have emerged unaided or in isolation. With the support of teachers, friends, colleagues, family and well-known scholars, I learned, matured, and dreamed beyond my grasp. I appropriated countless ideas from others and simply elevated them to the next level as dreams must always be bigger than the dreamer. Consequently, I wish to thank all the teachers and friends for knowingly and unknowingly encouraging and allowing me the freedom to explore my dreams. However, in pursuing the dream, I learned that *dreams don't work unless you do!*

If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Gonzo Journalism

My journal friends share that the first thing taught in journalism school is *don't be a part of the story*; consequently, I struggled to avoid writing in first person which demands the use of pronouns and becoming the story. In distributing my thoughts, I found the task too difficult to assume. My option was to limit the use of pronouns which from all indications I failed to successfully accomplish. Thus, the following manuscript becomes a first-person narrative participatory writing style whereby the author is the protagonist, which in literary circles is referred to as *Gonzo* journalism (Gonzo, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gonzo_journalism).

Gonzo journalism is a style of writing that is written which includes the writer as part of the story via a first-person narrative. Moreover, Gonzo writing is further expressed as *...an approach to reporting of personal experiences and emotions, in contrast to traditional commentary* (Gonzo, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gonzo_journalism). Therefore, pardon my use of first person as I know of no other way to share the personal back story. Also, pardon my excessive use of

metaphors which are interspersed throughout the manuscript; however, I find metaphors to be an excellent communicative and instructive tool.

Be yourself, everyone else is already taken.

Oscar Wilde

The Genesis: Lack of Quality of Research

Having been trained at the doctoral level primarily as a university health education *teacher* with a strong emphasis on *teaching*, early in my academic career I recognized that most universities bequeathed excessive lip service to teaching. However, at major research institutions financial rewards, promotion and tenure were primarily linked to research accomplishments not teaching (Glover, 2004). Once, I personally recognized that meaningful awards, accolades and salary increases were not necessarily linked to teaching but to research, my professional path swiftly refocused to embrace quality research. Shifting my primary focus from teaching to research was a difficult transition as I relished teaching, nonetheless, my pursuit to become a solid researcher became unwavering. In this fresh research exploration, I abandoned and created distance between any residue of my teacher moniker to pursue high-level research. Regrettably, at the time, I no longer desired to be recognized as a *health education teacher* but as a *health education researcher* and subsequently, a *health behavior researcher*. In this abrupt abandonment of quality teaching, research quickly became the drug I was duty bound to consume. However, after my tenacious assault into quality research and finally reaching the research mountain top, years later, I eventually returned to quality teaching and reclaimed a new personal radical belief that teaching and research were not adversaries but equals. Once I embraced Robert Frost's observation that, *I am not a teacher, but an awakener*, I quickly understood that research actually made me a stronger teacher.

The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend.

Henri-Louis Bergson

Trade or Research Journals?

Few colleagues are cognizant that for a brief period of time I contributed articles to *Runner's World*, a globally circulated monthly trade magazine for runners of all skill sets (Glover, 1980a; Landwer & Glover, 1980; Glover 1980b; Glover, 1982). It was then and continues to be the premier running magazine in the world. As a young unschooled research university professor, I had difficulty understanding why my penned manuscript in a trade magazine read by millions whereby, I received countless pieces of snail mail was of lesser importance than an authored research manuscript in a professional journal read primarily by fellow researchers. If teaching, learning and education were the theoretical goals of a university, why was the research paper in a professional research journal read by few and viewed by universities of greater importance than the illuminating publication in a trade magazine that reached and educated incalculable times the number of readers than that of a research manuscript? It appeared writing a research piece was for other researchers (ourselves) rather than truly educating. Sadly, I was compelled to abandon this incongruous principle for I wished to be known as a solid researcher and not a teacher. Upon honest reflection, am unsure if the new research direction was the result of chasing the money, yearning to be professionally recognized and appreciated, or genuinely wanting to advance the profession. Despite these misgivings, a steadfast thirst for research gradually bloomed as research temporarily appeared to nourish the remedies of these misgivings. In retrospect, I cannot accurately identify which misgiving contributed to the fundamental foundation that allowed me to truly embrace research. As Gandhi noted, "*Be the change you want in the world.*" I now befell that *change*.

Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
Will Rogers

Chasing Quality Research

After conceptually embracing research and pursuing research grants without crucial high-level research skills posed a major predicament. Thus, in an effort to generate quality grants and manuscripts; research-based statisticians were permanently integrated into every research project to ensure an accurate navigation of the research at hand. Gradually, I absorbed from outstanding statisticians what should have occurred in my doctoral training. By selecting brilliant statisticians for each project, I enjoyed access to my own personal statisticians who assisted in my continued private post-doctorate research development. Moreover, as I became a more accomplished researcher, it became evident that many health educators were in the identical predicament, that is, strong teachers lacking in high-level research skills. At health education conferences, I gravitated to other researchers and quickly discovered that many quality health education researchers were also members of other organizations (usually psychology organizations) to fulfill their personal research needs. These psychology organizations embraced research as a key segment of their organizational mission and did not merely provide lip service to research, whereas, health education organizations tended to emphasize teaching and service with research occupying a lesser enterprise. Consequently, I sensed a need for the creation of a research organization with like-minded colleagues who held a robust research interest. This revelation was further awakened by early professional interactions at health education conferences. It was these moments where I began to *seriously* entertain establishing an organization of health education researchers with the initial phase being to develop a set of bylaws. With colleagues exhibiting marginal support and encouragement, I was troubled that to conceive this research organization, I would probably have to embark on this venture, alone.

The pessimist see difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.

Winston Churchill

Unfolding The Academy

Dreams don't have deadlines; however, after carrying this research dream for nearly two decades, the time finally arrived to color outside the lines with all the colors in the Crayon box and smash past the traditional guard rails. I was at the base of the foothills ready to climb a colossal mountain. I had the recipe, now I had to bake the cake. I had to finally turn the dream into reality otherwise it would forever remain a dream. I have a tendency to throw myself violently into everything I think is worth undertaking, always with the opinion that intensity begets greatness. Moreover, I am often accused of *going over the top*; however, the time arrived as the greatest risk is not taking one; there is no reward without risk. I further understood that the first step is the steepest and the ship needed to sail, subsequently, after exploring countless websites and accompanying bylaws, the dream was finally teed up. I put my head in the lion's mouth with the watershed moment occurring April 1 (April Fool's Day) 1997 (McDermott & Glover, 2010). I had now taken the gigantic leap and couldn't put the toothpaste back in the tube. Much like the Wizard of Oz, April 1 was the day my black and white dream transformed into a technicolor organization; it was game, set, match. April 1 was selected as the birth of The Academy as the date would be challenging to overlook; moreover, should my dream fail, it would be my personal April Fool's witticism. The initial blueprint was to create a research organization for health educators, only later did The Academy become accessible to include all health behavior researchers irrespective of discipline. Nonetheless, it was time to stop dreaming and do it and to not mistake motion for action! Being slightly frightened at the size of the dream, I hadn't come this far to just come this far so, I charged ahead.

The size of your dreams must always exceed your current capacity to achieve them...
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

The vision for The Academy was to be as close to perfect as possible but far from normal. The Academy was intended to be distinctive from other organizations; either **bold** or *italicized* but never ‘regular’. My methodology focused on authenticity and less on economics as I trusted the cliché *that if you build it, they will come*. It was anticipated that other health educators would recognize that research universities emphasized research over teaching. Moreover, it was hoped that health educators were sufficiently honest with themselves to recognize that many health education colleagues were trained as teachers and extremely limited in superior research skills. Despite being a reputable idea to form a research cluster and to proceed beyond a set of bylaws, the execution of this idea was highly challenging. Where does one begin? How does one shape a professional organization? How does one promote such an organization? From where would the obligatory funds required for operational expenses emanate? Why would anyone pay a membership fee to join an organization with no history? How does one recruit members? Should there be annual meetings to accompany the membership? Who should be summoned to become founders? How do I amplify the organization? I needed to identify an approach that would breathe air into the brush fire I was about to create. There were many unfamiliar issues to address.

To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom.
Bertrand Russell

The initial notion of a new health behavior research organization was met with persistent negative collegial insolence. The most repeated undesirable sentiments were consistent with the notions that 1) *you can't just start an organization*, 2) *we already have too many health organizations* or 3) *due to your highly selective membership criteria, you will be viewed as elitists*. Due to these undesirable comments and many corrosive cheeky comments laced with some profanity which I am unable to share; hesitancy slowly tiptoed into my thinking and I momentarily felt alone inside my mind. Briefly, I held the outrageous notion that my vision was irrational as

very few supported the dream. However, a voice in my head quickly helped me regain my sanity by conjuring the illuminating Nike commercial, “*don’t ask if your dreams are crazy, ask if you are crazy enough to dream.*” The commercial facilitated a feeling that I was playing chess when everyone else was playing checkers. Moreover, I further reminded myself that if Columbus would have had an advisory committee or listened to others, he would still be standing at the shoreline. I clung strongly to the Columbus’ extraordinary notion that “*you can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore*” so, despite many colleagues’ negative concerns; mentally, I decisively departed the shoreline and did not look back. In retrospect, a personal discovery was while eagerly seeking advice from colleagues to establish an organization that I was actually seeking accomplices and found few.

Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others.
Jonathan Swift

As negative unanimity reigned that a new research organization in the prevailing climate was doomed to failure and as colleagues tossed negative brushback comments in an effort for me to step back from what they viewed as a faulty vision and a waste of time, I nonetheless pressed onward. I was decisively fully committed to following my heart, however, as a precaution and to balance out my passionate heart, made sure my rational brain tagged along into this uncharted water.

As many viewed my vision as a hallucination rather than a worthy dream, I had recurring fear that possibly my gigantic prodigious dream could give birth to a mere mouse. However, alternatively, I strongly sensed that my reality was everyone’s hallucination. Moreover, having been raised in a highly negative bi-racial complicated environment where one parent dropped out of school in the third grade, with no extended family member having attended college and parents with an overall absence of interest in education, unknowingly in my youth, I was in unremitting

training to deal with failure. Moreover, my childhood environment continually attempted to reinforce that I was *not* college material. My upbringing fully prepared me for the challenge as *failure* was a childhood friend, consequently, I easily became immune to these negative, corrosive collegial observations. Nonetheless, failure was never a consideration as failure was secondary to legitimacy as I constantly reminded myself that *real failure* is only when one gives up.

Consequently, as I moved forward, I aspired to scatter research breadcrumbs for others to consume and follow this vision, but would they? I have learned that if you don't give up, results always follow. Would they drink this unique organizational cool aid? Would this research vision metastasize to other researchers? I trusted, kept my fingers crossed and envisioned that other health education researchers both known and unknown to me, would pop up like mushrooms in a healthy spring rain.

Imagination is the highest kite one can fly.

Anonymous

Founders, Charter Members and Board of Directors

In the quest to build a solid foundation of researchers for this new research organization, I scrolled through my damaged rusty metal rolodex and distributed 34 health education research invitations to join me as founders of The Academy. However, two declined the invitation thus 32 in addition to myself became the founding members (McDermott & Glover, 2010). Am often asked who were the two researchers who declined the invitation...no need to mention their names, however, both were well-known health education researchers who at the time were on the cusp of retirement and both shared that they were slowly withdrawing from the profession and did not wish to add to another organization to their portfolio, nonetheless, both supported the concept and wished me well.

I was highly honored by the cadre of quality researchers who accepted my initial invitation to become Founding Members of The Academy (McDermott & Glover, 2010). In an effort to encourage and retain founders' support with the specific purpose of providing sufficient time to establish The Academy, a two-year membership was waived which I funded for all members. By retaining the founders for two years, it was anticipated that these well-known researchers would attract other researchers. The first group of 18 recruited members who actually joined and paid dues owned a nobler commitment than the founders and were to be known as Charter Members. The Academy Petri dish was primed as The Academy now comprised of Founders and Charter Members; however, would other researchers join and propagate in this fertile Petri research dish?

Inasmuch as there were no Academy members for an election to ensue, likewise, no previous board members, my self-appointed Founding Board members were; Drs. David R. Black, James M. Eddy, Nicholas K. Iammarino, Mark J. Kittleson, Molly T. Laflin, Terri Mulkins Manning, Robert J. McDermott, Mohammad R. Torabi, Robert M. Weiler, and Chudley E. "Chad" Werch (McDermott and Glover 2010). Moreover, as founder I was appointed president for the first year to provide sufficient time for The Academy to establish itself; however, my presidency eventually stretched into three and half years. Dr. Chudley E. "Chad" Werch was appointed the first president elect with the first membership-elected president being Dr. Robert J. McDermott. Dr. Terri Mulkins Manning a former student from my employment at Oklahoma State University was identified as the initial Executive Director. Today, several Executive Directors later, Joanne Sommers is the most tenured Executive Director to date and performing an outstanding job.

Nothing great was every achieved without enthusiasm.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Taking Harpoons: Initial Criticism

Critical to the foundation of The Academy was that *meritocracy*; not gender, not race/ethnicity, nor politics was to hold the keys to kingdom. The Academy was accessible to any applicant who held a predilection for research and possessed a specific number of research publications; again, gender, or race/ethnicity were to play *no role* in admittance. The Academy was to be about the work (output)! Schmoozing, teaching and service were secondary to research achievement. Nonetheless, I had thrown the *research chum* overboard and hoped to attract research sharks irrespective of gender or race/ethnicity.

However, I received many harpoons regarding my appointed founders as my initial board consisted of a paucity of females. In defense, I did not seek males who were distinguished researchers. The male researchers invited were distinguished researchers and secondarily males. From a quick perusal of The Academy membership today, female members easily outnumber male members, moreover, females are fully engaged in The Academy and from my biased perception are the current worker bees of The Academy. Worker bees get things done.

If you educate a man you educate a person, but if you educate a woman you educate a family.
Rudy Manikan

Before a reader silently admonishes me of gender bias (as many have), I will plead guilty, however, not in the direction one might assume. While chair at the University of Maryland, I hired 23 faculty and staff; 20 females and three males because of their credentials not gender. I hired the women over men and was criticized for favoring women candidates nonetheless, if I believed the men were more skilled, I would have hired more men. Personally, I find that professional women due to entertaining several roles; a mother, wife, housekeeper, caregiver, cook, professor, etc., from my personal observation tend to multi-task better than men, pay closer attention to detail, are better team players, more willing to compromise and generally more sensitive and understanding of human issues. I comprehend that women have been long discriminated against but to overcorrect to

hand pick one gender over another gender simply because of gender is wrong; two wrongs don't make a right.

Professional gender trends have shifted dramatically as our health profession consists of primarily women and will continue to be reflected in the future, however, it is NEVER a reason to pick a lesser accomplished person over a more accomplished person by favoring either gender. In any direct competition, the most qualified person (female or male) should always be rewarded by The Academy. The gender shift has occurred in medical schools, law schools, universities and many professional occupations and in time most awards will radically shift to reflect The Academy membership as well.

I would rather trust a woman's instinct than a man's reason.
Stanley Baldwin

Opposing Members

As The Academy began to bloom and stabilize, the membership began to broaden beyond health education researchers to embrace all health behavior researchers regardless of discipline. However, one Founding Member and one regular member were adamant in their disapproval of opening The Academy to researchers outside health education who they believed to be intruders. They intensely felt that these trespassers and their ilk would gradually overwhelm the number of health education researchers and that The Academy would lose its health education identity. Moreover, they threatened to resign if the organization was unwrapped to include any health behavior researcher outside of health education. They only desired as Dr. McDermott noted...*“health educators who were committed to the health education literature and their own kind”* (McDermott, 2003). These dissenters appeared to be apprehensive by the gradual transformational change of The Academy from health education behavior researchers to include any health behavior researcher regardless of discipline. They took personal offense to my belief

that many health educators were deficient in quality research skills, were absent within the research literature, and that The Academy was dismissive of health educator research skills. Change is a double-edged sword for it evokes fear, loss, danger and panic on one side and exhilaration, excitement, improvement and energy on the other (Fullan, 2001). Whereas, The Academy was experiencing the latter, these two dissenters appeared to be experiencing the former. Rather than reasonably embracing apprehension and welcoming new views, they remained resistant which was unfortunate for true innovation comes from crossing disciplines.

Sadly, my experience is when many traditional health educators are asked to name true experts in various areas of research, they can only name fellow health educators. In my personal readings of the great minds, what made Franklin, da Vinci, Jobs, Einstein, Michelangelo, Nietzsche, Jefferson, Newton, and Socrates geniuses was a passionate curiosity and a love for crossing disciplines. Einstein was known to have once stated, *I have no special talents, I am only passionately curious*. Moreover, crossing disciplines allows one to view the identical issue with a different set of lens, this approach contradicts the solitary myopic notion that *I see and know all*. Nonetheless, a compromise was reached with the two malcontents to limit the membership of non-health educators to 25% of the membership. However, once the most vocal board member rotated off the board, the 25% membership filter limit was lifted, and the membership was unwrapped to include any health behavior researcher regardless of field of study. Today, The Academy consists of different disciplines who come together to coalesce to generate, disseminate, exchange and promote quality health behavior research regardless of field of study.

Passion is in all great searches and is necessary to all creative endeavors.

W. Eugene Smith

Initially: The Official Journal of The Academy

As owner of the *American Journal of Health Behavior* (American Journal of Health Behavior, <https://aahb.org>). I initially designated it as The Academy's official journal. At the time, the journal was in its 22nd year of publication with subscribers in 38 countries and 50 states; moreover, its trademark was well established around the world. By naming the journal as the official journal of The Academy, my strategy was to link the pre-existing highly prized journal with a birthing organization, so as to provide clout to the infant group in hopes of attracting qualified members.

Once The Academy extended its research tentacles to 15 years of existence and established its own organizational reputation by attracting numerous young bright and impressive researchers as well as more profound and established scholars, The Academy and the journal needed to disengage as the journal was a for-profit venture whereas, I established The Academy was a non-profit entity. Given the maturation of The Academy, a separation of the two entities was the appropriate course of action. Thus, on June 30, 2012, the journal ceased to be the official journal of The Academy. The Academy became free to identify another journal or initiate its own as its official journal. Today, The Academy has developed its own journal, *Health Behavior Research* (Health Behavior Research, <https://aahb.org/Health-Behavior-Research-HBR-Journal>). The new journal is experiencing the typical growing pains all journals encounter and appears to be headed toward a spot-on direction to become a quality journal. However, with the number of new and predatory journals endlessly surfacing, currently, it is a difficult climate to establish a journal. Consequently, progress will be slower than normal and I anticipate that it will take several years before the journal is fully competitive with similar journals.

Due to an unexpected personal health scare (thyroid cancer) and advancing age, the journal was put up for sale, consequently, at the 2019 Greenville, South Carolina AAHB conference I met

with The Academy board to discuss the possible sale and transfer of the *American Journal of Health Behavior* to The Academy. It appeared everyone who participated in these meetings was highly encouraging. The Academy appointed a special group to study the potential transfer, unfortunately, The Academy Board choose not to pursue the offer. Not being involved in the private Academy discussions, I cannot share the reasoning for the decline but am disappointed. From my perspective, purchasing the journal would have allowed The Academy to be free of any future financial concerns.

As part of my looming retirement and slowly withdrawing from professional and academic obligations, I took the liberty of selling my portfolio of journals. In 2020, I sold *Health Behavior and Policy Review* and in 2021, both the *American Journal of Health Behavior* and *Tobacco Regulatory Science* were sold.

Wisdom outweighs any wealth.
Sophocles

Initial Meeting Venue

After its birth, The Academy began its transition into a young toddler; however, a quandary confronted the newly appointed board to identify a unique venue for its initial membership assembly. After extensive and at times quarrelsome board dialogue, the fall season was selected, specifically, September 23-27, 2000 with Santa Fe, New Mexico as the inaugural gathering venue. Moreover, with insufficient Academy funds (as founders were provided two-year free memberships and limited funds were available from the Charter Members) without hesitation, the 70 rooms and conference venue were guaranteed to my personal credit card. I consider myself a shrewd businessman; however, in retrospect, this decision was *NOT* a shrewd business decision; however, at the time, the laser focus was on a successful gathering not my financial concerns.

Why not go out on a limb? Isn't that where the fruit is?

Frank Scully

For the Sunday night inaugural awards dinner ceremony, 110 persons prepaid registration fees, however, the meeting venue held dinner seating for 108 persons. I recall the board scrambling and concerned there would be insufficient seating if all registrants attended the opening ceremony. To heighten the concern, what if additional attendees registered at the conference and easily exceeded the existing 110 registrants? In preparation of excessive attendees, if needed, all board members, volunteered their seating. Fortunately, we evaded a major hurdle as not all registrants attended the opening awards ceremony.

Desiring the inaugural meeting to be different than other organizations, male members were urged to wear tuxedos and female members to wear evening dresses. Many complied for this special occasion, it was a breathtaking site. Everyone hailed the inaugural meeting as an enormous success, however, throughout the meeting, several rational objections were articulated against future fall gatherings. The criticisms were due to the number of holidays during the months of November and December with limited days available for a conference. Moreover, other organizations occupied many of the available dates in the fall. It was further noted there was insufficient time to submit travel plans early in the academic year and have funds approved by their organizations (primarily university personnel). It became apparent that the fall season was not suitable for a conference gathering; accordingly, we chose to amend future gathering from the fall semester months to the spring months of February/March which was 18 months away. This decision was met with mild criticism by selected attendees who felt that we had established a wonderful inaugural rhythm that to embrace the next meeting 18 months away rather than the typical 12 months would disrupt The Academy tempo.

We all live under the same sky, but we don't all have the same horizon.

Konrad Adenauer

Moving the Annual Meeting

Given member concerns, we refocused the scheduled fall 2001 meeting to spring of 2002 to hold the meeting in Napa Valley, California. Unknowingly, we were highly fortunate to have relocated the second meeting to spring for if we would have held our second meeting the following September 2001, it may have been held immediately following 9/11 when virtually all travel was restricted by most universities and agencies. Travel funds at universities were impenetrable, and very few persons were allowed to travel. Due to that horrific day in 9/11 another casualty could have easily been The Academy.

The Academy was highly fortunate to have moved the meeting to spring 2002. In 2001, while conducting a site visit for a future meeting while at the resort in Sedona, Arizona 9/11 ensued. I recall board members, scrambling to rent cars to drive home across the country, others struggling to reschedule cancelled flight plans, and mild panicking for not being able to make sense of what was occurring. All flights were cancelled, consequently, many board members remained in Arizona till flights became accessible. Having marginally and professionally known researchers Drs. Mohammad R. Torabi and Robert J. McDermott, we became sincere friends during this uncertain period as we remained together in Phoenix for a few days until air travel became accessible. Again, if the second meeting would have been held as originally planned, there are serious doubts The Academy would exist today or be as further along in its development. Once again, with scarce funds available to The Academy, the 70 rooms for the conference would have been guaranteed to my personal credit card without cancellation insurance! I would not have gone bankrupt but 9/11 would have placed a major strain on my personal bank account.

I dream my painting and I paint my dream.

Vincent Van Gogh

Growing Pains

Understandably, organizations grow and change. The Academy should not cling to the past or it cannot see what is emerging in the future. Likewise, there is always room for improvement as it is always the biggest room in the house, nonetheless, my parting request of The Academy is to remain as true as possible to the four key birthing principles which makes The Academy distinctive from other organizations; 1) embrace meritocracy in all aspects of The Academy, 2) retain research qualifications for various memberships, 3) retain the Fellow, Research Laureate and Lifetime Achievement Awards and 4) limit the size of The Academy not to exceed 300 members. In interacting with new members, some do not embrace these principles mainly because these principles have never been communicated to them with their only paradigm being other organizations.

1) Meritocracy. My 10,000-foot view of The Academy suggests that due to its qualifying members that it currently on solid ground and will continue to garnish respect; however, deep dive into the 100-foot view suggests that to keep from losing ground that specific founding ideologies must be valued to resist erosion. Most organizations rely on schmoozing, friendships, service and politics for awards and recognition; however, The Academy was to be unique. Front and center, the crucial key and major principle that *must* remain intact is that *meritocracy* should be the primary admission criteria not gender, not race/ethnicity, not service, not teaching or not politics. It should be about the work (research) not the person. We *must* constantly remind the membership that The Academy, first and foremost is a meritocracy, it is about the work.

2) Admission Requirements. Our admission philosophy is unlike any other health organization as members must meet a defined level of research to become an affiliate or full member. Remarkably, when attempting to recruit members, I was stunned to discover that many

well-known professionals were *not* well-known for research but for their service to the profession, their longevity in the profession, or their sociable personality. Conversely, many lesser-known individuals easily qualified as full members as they were unassuming researchers who quietly went about their research. I quickly learned that one cannot always judge the quality of researchers by their visibility in the profession. To hold a unique niche among professional health organizations, we must retain the research admission requirements. The admission requirements are closely interrelated to our guiding principle; *meritocracy*, as it is about the work (productivity).

I have learned to use the word impossible with great caution.

Wernher von Braun

3) Retaining Existing Awards.

a) Fellow. Typically, the Fellow designation in most health organizations tends to place greater value on service contributions, name recognition, and organizational longevity which alone typically satisfy inclusion criteria as Fellow. A personal recollection is being named Fellow in a major association with simply a telephone call whereby it was communicated that it appeared that success was in my future and would I accept being named a Fellow. So, with a simple telephone call and question, I became a Fellow. Moreover, in most organizations research and scholarship, if required verification of credentials, is sufficiently modest. In contrast, The Academy's Fellow status should necessitate meeting explicit, rigorous, and verifiable criteria based exclusively on one's demonstrable scholarship with respect to research – peer-reviewed publications, grants, and presentations to scholarly audiences. If The Academy is to consist of researchers, we need to represent research distinction. Thus, in keeping with the assigned meritocratic theme of The Academy, to earn the Fellow status, Fellow demanded that it be about the work output not personalities, service or longevity. It is desired that when named Fellow of The Academy (FAAHB) and given the privilege of listing FAAHB after one's degree(s) that this special

designation truly embodies extraordinary research status and identifies that person as a highly skilled researcher. The designation has served The Academy well, for when observing a Fellow pin or the FAAHB letters after one's degrees that a specific threshold of research criteria has been achieved by research not personality.

Nonetheless, the Fellow criteria were established over two decades ago, it is time to update certain aspects especially, grant dollars secured. Inflation has eroded the dollar figure which makes it easier to conquer Fellow status. When sharing this grant dollar upgrade with existing Fellow members, they fully agree, however, justifiably those persons approaching Fellow status do not wish for the goal posts to be repositioned, which from their perspective becomes more demanding to attain. A simple solution is to make the change active at a future date (three-five years from now). This would allow current members approaching Fellow status sufficient time to meet existing criteria or grandfather current members with the existing guidelines. However, some Fellow candidates will logically argue that research dollars are not readily obtainable and are more difficult to secure than in past years. Bottom line, whenever change occurs there will be supporters and dissenters, never to please everyone. Once again, change is difficult for most persons, nonetheless, in respect for the criteria, new updated criteria should be implemented to keep up with inflation and the changing research landscape.

b) Research Laureate Medallion. The Research Laureate Medallion was intended to be a unique award designated for Fellows whose career is stellar and profound. Unlike the various plaques, trophies, or certificates that are commonly received by individuals who emerge as the best in their field, the Research Laureate Medallion was intended to be an exceptional and prized representation of excellence. I pulled inspiration from Olympic medals; consequently, contacted the designer of Olympic medals. The eventual design was a consequence of the combined labor of

Drs. Robert M. Weiler, Molly T. Laflin and myself. It was hoped that being a recipient of the Research Laureate Medallion would one day be the benchmark of profound distinction for health behavior researchers. The first recipient of this prestigious award was Dr. Lawrence W. Green, a highly respected researcher, theoretician, and philosopher across numerous disciplines related to health education, health behavior and health care. With the Research Laureate Medallion, I swiftly established the tradition of having the recipient become the presenter of the Research Laureate Medallion to the subsequent year's awardee. The clever idea was put forth primarily to encourage Dr. Green to return to the second meeting as he was a major draw to any professional gathering.

Clear your mind of can't.

Dr. Samuel Johnson

c) Lifetime Achievement Award. The Lifetime Achievement Award was established to honor the "rarest of company" and to be given to those persons who have made major contributions well-beyond normal honors and recognitions. The award was designed for persons either within or outside The Academy; moreover, it is the only award that can be earned by a researcher outside The Academy. To date, only three persons have been awarded that designation with myself, Albert Bandura and Lawrence W. Green being the recipients. I should note that I feel honored but somewhat embarrassed that I am in this esteemed group; however, I was awarded this honor not necessarily for my research but for founding The Academy.

4) Limit membership. The research membership requirements will inherently limit the size of our organization and is the most debated birthing principle by the membership. Many equate a large membership with strength, power and influence whereas, others enjoy the excellence that comes with small highly selective intimate gatherings.

Originally, my vision for The Academy was to be a small collection of researchers. This would allow the organization to meet in unique and unusual venues, not the mainstream settings. To convene in venues on the yellow roads on maps not the more traveled motorways designated as blue or red roads. Remaining a small organization preserves intimate gatherings whereby attendees easily develop relationships for potential research collaborations and friendships. In my 40+ years in the profession, I have met more researchers and their spouses through The Academy than all other organizational meetings combined. However, I have learned that as The Academy operational costs rise that we need more members to fund our enterprise as we cannot continue to raise membership dues or conference registration fees so, the obvious is to recruit more members or have more persons attend the annual meetings. Not sure where the membership should be capped. Moreover, am uncertain we can recruit a large membership as, we do not turn anyone away who meets the admission criteria and our membership has increased only marginally. However, am constantly being asked what is my cap number. I believe 300 members would allow The Academy to meet our financial obligations and save money for a rainy day. Moreover, we also need to concentrate on retention of members as we seem to be unable to retain members for a long period of time.

I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow.
Woodrow Wilson

One method to increase our financial coffers, is to attract more attendees at our meetings! Our lack of comprehensive targeted marketing promoting our meeting and organization is a missed opportunity. Targeted marketing requires the full program be in place well before the conference date; consequently, unsure this marketing is possible as the program is coming together later and

later with little marketing time available time. With my primitive marketing, I was able to attract between 120-125 attendees for the initial meeting including adding several new members.

Conference attendees have not increased considerably since the initial meeting. We need more marketing. The question how to market can seem very complicated but the answer is simple - targeted marketing. It's the little things that make the big things possible.

If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time.
Zig Ziglar

Desirable Meeting Venues

A small membership does allow The Academy to gather at extraordinary venues. Few (if any) organizations can name Santa Fe NM, Napa Valley CA, Carmel CA, St Augustine FL, Sedona AZ, Charleston SC, Savannah GA, Hilton Head SC, Tucson AZ, Greenville SC, Key Largo FL and other highly desirable venues as gathering places.

To cultivate a larger membership similar to other major organizations would dictate meeting in larger venues; New York, Atlanta, San Francisco, Dallas, Boston, Washington DC, etc. Not that these cities are undesirable, but the larger organizations rotate through their larger venues through these cities, whereas, The Academy members who are also members of these organizations will visit these cities many times over the course of their career. The Academy was intended to be unique and small to allow us to gather in extraordinary venues.

Am often probed how we secured Dr. Albert Bandura as keynote speaker at one of The Academy's small annual research meetings. Prefacing my response, in 2002, Bandura was noted among the 100 most eminent psychologists of the 20th century (Haggbloom et al, 2002). In an exhaustive study of renowned psychologists by Haggbloom et al, Bandura was listed as the fifth most cited psychologists in the professional psychological journal literature. (Haggbloom et al,

2002). Moreover, Bandura was further listed as the third most frequently cited psychologist in introductory psychology textbooks with Freud and Skinner occupying the first two slots and Piaget and Rogers rounding out the fourth and fifth slots. So, *how in the world did we secure Bandura for one of The Academy meetings?* Under normal circumstances, The Academy could never meet the honorarium and travel demands of the most famous living psychologist today. However, my response is simple...first, you ask don't be afraid of being turned down; however, in our discussions, Dr. Bandura noted that he was attracted by a small, unique, extraordinary and highly desirable venue—Carmel, California and further encouraged and influenced by an Academy founding member (Dr. David R. Black) who happened to be one of his former students.

Nothing will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must first be overcome.

Dr. Samuel Johnson

A personal analogous illustration is when asked to speak at an undesirable venue in an undesirable city in an undesirable part of the country, my fees are unforgiving. My fees are further accompanied by unyielding travel demands. The bottom line...if the organization is willing to submit to my stubborn requests, then I would succumb to visiting an undesirable venue. However, if invited to speak at a highly desirable venue e.g., Honolulu, after quoting my fee and expenses and to prevent the outright rejection of the fees, I always note that the fees are negotiable. Should the organization counter that the fees are excessive, I reduce the fee and many times have agreed to deliver the lecture with no honorarium if only they cover expenses. Reason for the fee concession is that Hawaii is a highly desirable setting, therefore, I make every effort to accommodate my pursuer. Why all the detailed explanation? To strengthen the notion that meeting in unique venues with an accompanying small meeting is a highly attractive brand that make The Academy exceedingly distinctive. As previously noted, The Academy was intended to be either **bold** or *italicized* but never 'regular'. Being distinctive by congregating in unique highly desirable small

venues allows us to spread our unique research antennas and occupy a niche no other health organization occupies. Small is consistent with my mantra that “Small is Big” as small allows us to improve our attendee conference experience by creating more personal space which allows us to interact with colleagues on a more personal level. Yes, venue and size do matter!

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.
Thomas Edison

Fading from The Academy

Retreating from the profession is marginally out of my control as the fourth quarter is gradually ticking away with no timeouts available; my academic game is hesitantly coming to an end. Every day may appear a little bluer, however, not to sound overly melancholic or have anyone feel blue for me, withdrawing from the profession is a matter of perspective as my mind has convinced my heart that it is all in how you look at things. Nonetheless, I have come to the end of a long and winding road. If you pull back the curtain there is no Oz or a sad ending that I am exiting the profession, but upon reflection, a new beginning as I will spend additional time enjoying the family, experiencing new cuisine delights, relishing excellent wine and of course, traveling. Always, with the satisfaction that I believe, I made a difference which viscerally delivers an overwhelming feeling of exhilaration. I was able to unleash my own song and able to follow a consistent life theme to strive to leave things better than I found them. However, I would give up all the tomorrows to relive the electrifying and exciting days of the founding of The Academy.

Growth demands temporary surrender of security.
Gail Sheehy

However, not to completely evaporate from The Academy, I am available as a bench substitute and if needed will always be available to The Academy. A quote in USA Today (May 29, 2018) by Abby Wambach, a retired soccer star shares a viewpoint I wish to cultivate in my

senior days. ... *“Imagine this—you’ve scored more goals than any human being on the planet—female or male. You’ve co-captained and led Team USA in almost every category for the past decade. And you and your coach sit down and decide together that you won’t be a starter in your last World Cup for Team USA. So that sucked. ... You are allowed to be disappointed when it feels like life’s benched you. What you aren’t allowed to do is miss your opportunity to led from the bench. ... If you’re not a leader on the bench, don’t call yourself a leader on the field. You’re either a leader everywhere or nowhere.”* To date, I have attended EVERY Academy meeting and will continue to do so, however, I may not be as involved as I would relish, however, will be endlessly cheering The Academy from the bench always ready to assist when called upon and of course, if able.

Initially, the decision to create The Academy was an important and personal decision to coalesce with other researchers; however, that moment now looms much greater than originally envisioned. Hopefully, the domino effect will create a snowballing effect that when one singular event propels a chain of similar events, in this case, growth and prominence. The Academy will continue to evolve for I cannot control the winds of change, but perhaps, The Academy can readjust its sails to address today’s needs and reach the original destination outlined in the initial vision and keep the original dream alive.

As a parting declaration, I am humbled, honored and proud to be a part of The Academy. If I could change or re-experience my wonderful professional life, I would have founded The Academy sooner for I miss those researchers I never met or those I will never meet. A wonderful quote from Jeb Bush to George W. Bush states it well; *“My life has not always been perfect as I have fumbled many times on the 2-yard line, but tenacious persistence always allowed me to ultimately score.”*

It is difficult to interfere in someone else's dream, but The Academy is no longer the dream of one person but the dream of many. I may have dreamed it, but it is up to the members to sustain the dream. Paraphrasing William Arthur Ward, "*If you can dream it, you can imagine it; if you can imagine it, you can see it; if you can see it, it can happen.*"

Edith Wharton, noted "*there are two ways of spreading light; to be the candle or the mirror that reflects.*" I am wishing that all members of The Academy become the mirror and continue to reflect the researcher light and always remain curious. Hopefully, members will plant research trees for the future whose shade they will never enjoy. As they say, *Laissez les bons temps rouler*, let the good times roll. Thank you for allowing me to participate.

Man's desires are limited by his perceptions; none can desire what he has not been perceived.

William Blake

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