On January 1, 2008, Andy Wechsler will have completed eight years as editor of The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery. The leadership of The American Association for Thoracic Surgery (AATS) feels compelled to commend and thank publicly Dr. Wechsler for the superlative stewardship and job he has accomplished.

Academically, the Journal earned the highest impact factor in its history in 2005 (3.727) and 2006 (3.56). Andy replaced commentaries located at the end of articles with solicited editorials with author bylines and encouraged the editorialists to discuss study results in the larger context of evidence-based issues and patient care. He appointed an Ethics Editor and an Ethics Panel to deal with conflict of interest and developed an industry-standard conflict of interest management system. It is most difficult to censure colleagues and fellow surgeons, but Andy established a rigorous high standard for academic integrity that we are proud of. He added the Evolving Technology section to spotlight new and novel technologically based treatments and procedures and “Statistics for the Rest of Us” to help cardiothoracic surgeons comprehend, use, and interpret modern biostatistics, which is so important for clinical research. He initiated in November 2001 on-line publication of videos to accompany articles and encouraged the use of on-line-only Brief Communications and article-specific on-line E-appendices where detailed methods, figures, and tables could be presented fully.

One cannot talk about these and other accomplishments of the Journal without also giving ample credit to Pamela Fried, Managing Editor of JTCVS since 1999, who brought true publishing professionalism to the production of a highly technical surgical scientific journal. Ms. Fried exercised excellent editorial and management skills that played an important part in the success of the Journal during Dr. Wechsler’s tenure as editor. Andy and Pam brought the Journal into the 21st century by introducing electronic submission of manuscripts and reviews using Editorial Manager, which easily handled the progressively increasing number of submissions (now processing over 1,500 annual submissions, a 70% increase) and led to faster turnaround times for authors and reviewers. The new system also saved a lot of trees and Federal Express charges! The editorial staff redesigned the cover and interior of the Journal to improve its image and readability. Ms. Fried recruited and trained a professional staff, who also provided editorial management support for two quarterly AATS publications (Seminars in Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery and Operative Techniques in Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery: A Comparative Atlas). Pam collaborated with the managing editors of the other cardiothoracic journals and with HighWire Press (Stanford University Libraries) in the development of monthly on-line CME offerings based on JTCVS papers. She also enhanced our collaboration with CTSNet to assure the broadest
Andy Wechsler has enhanced the overall level of professionalism surrounding the Journal and set a level of customer service commensurate with the JTCVS’s stature in the field. The positive impact of this approach has resulted in smooth working relationships between the editorial office, editors, reviewers, and authors. In acknowledgment of his superlative contributions, the AATS Council recently appointed Andy to a new position, that of JTCVS Editor Emeritus.

Dr. Wechsler has been the ideal JTCVS editor. He is a superb clinician, a widely respected and thoughtful scholarly investigator, a renowned teacher, and an internationally recognized leader in cardiothoracic surgery. We have borrowed him long enough and recognize it is about time that Donna gets her husband back: She deserves to see more of Andy than just his back when he is hunched over the computer for endless hours every night. We also have been fearful of violating the personal work hour regulations in the Wechsler household, given Andy’s dedication to the Journal during his time as editor. Andy, we thank you for what you have done for the AATS and for the field of cardiothoracic surgery; the AATS could not have made a better choice in 1999 when you were nominated to become seventh editor of the JTCVS, following in the footsteps of Evarts Graham (1931–1957), Emile Holman (1957–1962), Brian Blades (1962–1977), Dwight McGoon (1977–1987), John Kirklin (1987–1994), and John Waldhausen (1994–1999). You have raised the bar for excellence, veracity, and integrity even higher than these illustrious giants in our field who preceded you could possibly have envisioned. The AATS will be forever grateful for your selfless dedication to The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery.