

"Thanks for What You Do!"

By James Edwards, DC

Before Sept. 11, 2001, I must admit I pretty much took firemen, policemen and the members of our military for granted. Not anymore! In fact, since Sept. 14, 2001 (the first time I was in an airport after the terrorist attacks), I have not passed a fireman, policeman or uniformed service person without touching their shoulder and saying, "Thanks for what you do."

When I first started doing this, every one of them was caught off guard and genuinely surprised someone would take the effort to thank them for their service. That is no longer true. Now when I acknowledge their service, they are no longer surprised, because so many citizens now do the same thing.

I feel so strongly about this simple expression of gratitude that I do it even if I am rushing through an airport or - as it occurred last week - after getting stopped for speeding! And while certainly not on par with firemen, policemen and the military, all of whom are willing to put their lives on the line for us, many members of this profession also labor long and hard for you and deserve your gratitude.

Recently, my practice partner, wife and ACA delegate, Dr. Cindy Vaughn, was getting ready to leave for the airport to fly to Washington, D.C., for an ACA meeting. She was willing to do that even though we had close personal friends from Germany as houseguests; and even though her mother was flying in from Oregon a few hours after her scheduled departure. When our son's high-school football game suddenly was moved to that night, I strongly encouraged her not to go because she had just too many conflicts.

Ultimately, she agreed that the three combined conflicts were just too much to overcome and she canceled her flight. As a result, Cindy was able to enjoy her son's football game and

surprise her mother when she arrived. But it was not without personal anguish, because after her decision was made, she second-guessed herself for several days afterward. In a word, she felt guilty and believed she had let the ACA down.

Her feelings gave me a new appreciation for the dedication of and the sacrifices paid by the volunteer leaders of this profession, and how we take them for granted. When I discussed this with ACA Vice President, Dr. Glenn Manceaux, he said, "Yeah, no one knows all the family things we miss." He then related how he spent his wedding anniversary this year at an ACA meeting instead of with his wife.

So, why are state licensing board members, college trustees, PAC officers, state association board officers and ACA leaders willing to make these sacrifices for the profession? It's sure not for the notoriety, because so few know of their service or remember it. If you don't believe me, just try to name three members of your state licensing board, or the secretary-treasurer of your state association, or your ACA district governor.

And they sure don't do it for the money, because some of these jobs do not even reimburse the volunteer for expenses. Now, add in the lost income from being out the office, and you realize that serving in these positions costs the doctor thousands and thousands of dollars each year.

I'll tell you why they do it. Again, while not on the same level, they do it for the same reason firemen, policemen and uniformed service members do what they do. They are dedicated to a cause and are willing to sacrifice personally for the greater good.

So, the next time you walk by a fireman, policeman or member of the armed forces, I encourage you to stop and take the time to express your gratitude for their service. And the next time you spot a volunteer leader in the chiropractic profession, please take the time to say, "Thanks for what you do!"

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