

Ann Thompson-Haas 2009 Si Seymour Award Acceptance Speech

September 26, 2009, San Francisco, Calif.

This is so wonderful...overwhelming and wonderful. And I was thinking, it is especially wonderful in this room. When this hotel opened in 1990, I was DOD of a hospital up the hill. The official opening of the hotel was a gala benefit – in this room – for one of our programs.

The 1990 AHP International Conference was the first conference contracted to be held in this hotel. I was on that fabulous and fun conference committee and we had hard hat tours of the hotel and meetings in these rooms.

In 1995, I received my Fellows medal in the area of this room. Now, this wonderful honor today—I think I like this room.

I would like to do two things with my remarks. First, thank some very deserving people, and, then comment on what this award means to me and our profession.

So to start, thank you again to Holly and her committee. I'm so honored and grateful.

Thank you also to Sharon Jones and everyone else involved in the nominating process. I will forever be grateful. This means so much to me.

Thanks also to the AHP Board for continuing to sponsor this award as one way of inspiring excellence in our profession.

None of us would be up here if it weren't for the support and good work of the AHP staff. I appreciate you and thank you.

As I look around the room I see so many people who are special to me, who have given me the opportunity to serve. I wish I could name you all, but I give you a big group hug.

I do believe so strongly in education and learning—they are keys to success and live. So I thank everyone who gave me the opportunity to be involved in the portion of the mission related to education.

I've appreciated the opportunities to speak at regional conferences, the International conference, the Madison Institute, Madison Down Under, the Primer and the Advanced Course. One of my greatest privileges has been to chair the Fellows Exam – as I believe it is such an important standard of excellence and great personal accomplishment.

Thank you to you, and all of the other very special friends, students and people with whom I've worked.

Thank you, and I share this with each of you.

There is one other person I share this with and whom I must thank for his contributions to AHP; my husband John Thompson-Haas.

John is not here today because he is with an ill family member.

He, however, has helped, ever since the very first volunteer job I did for AHP – back before electronic newsletters, and we sat at the dining room table and stuffed regional newsletter into envelopes.

He sat with me on the porch on a muggy summer night calling out questions to help me prepare to stand for the Fellows certification.

And he was an invisible but vital part of the team that prepared the Advanced Course. There was so much typing and layout work to do to get that ready to go to the press and spent hours, evenings and weekends helping me type, we wouldn't have made it without him.

John likes to call himself one of the charter members of the AHP Auxiliary.

Finally, I was to thank my family, especially my grandparents who were the living, breathing, walking, talking definition of philanthropy.

They weren't wealthy, but they gave all they could to the people and organizations of their community.

And it is that word community that brings me to what this award means to me.

This award means to me what I hope it means to you, that I have been of service to the community of AHP.

For I believe AHP is a community. We are not a community defined by geography; by street, block, neighborhood, town, city or zip code.

We are a community of people who share a common purpose; a singular passion.

We are a community that believes our geographic communities deserve the best healthcare resources.

We aren't at the bedside ourselves, but we want the doctors, nurses and other caregivers who are at the bedside to have the tools they need to do their best work.

We know our donors want to make a difference with their gifts and it's our job to show them how.

We know that when our volunteers engage with us, whether event volunteers, campaign community leaders or board members that they are seeking to achieve their life's aspirations. And the gifts we give them are as important as the gifts they give us.

We are also a community of people who care about each other.

I will never forget my first three weeks as a member of AHP.

I was so lucky, because my new boss in my first full-time healthcare philanthropy job – at a hospital not too far from here - signed me up for AHP membership and my first regional conference, even before I started.

In the first few days on the job, I received a call from the AHP Regional Director telling me, *"Welcome, let us know how we can help."*

Then I received a call from a Fellow who took me to lunch and said,
“Welcome, let me know how I can help.”

About a week later, I attended a local networking luncheon where I met a new friend, who, because I asked, sent me a fat packet crammed with brochures, annual reports, letters and other goodies, with a note that read,
“Let me know what else I can do to help.”

Then, I went to the regional conference, and I was awash in a warm wave of collegueship, camaraderie, information, ideas, resources, phone numbers.

I knew I had found a community I wanted to be part of, and a community to which I would want to give back for all I had already received.

In the time since that first job, one of the resources I’ve often turned to is the book, “Designs for Fundraising,” by the namesake of this award, Si Seymour.

If you haven’t read his book, I highly recommend it and I believe you can find it on the AHP web site.

In this seminal book, Mr. Seymour reminds us of the core and timeless principles that guide our work.

I would like to share a composite of quotes from Mr. Seymour’s book. Mr. Seymour writes:

“Development is a dynamic word. It is a catalyst....To achieve excellence, here is what you should do: know your background, know your donors, your leaders and your colleagues; then plan your course; and then, for Pete’s sake, (he actually writes that) get out there and do your stuff!” (He writes that, too.)

He also writes:

“One of our first responsibilities is to act with confidence... and to generate confidence in the cause we serve.”

“And we must always remember that ours is a position of advocating for higher standards and optimum performance...in doing so, we are advocating for the common good, as few others are privileged to do.”

It is a privilege to serve through our profession, isn’t it? How lucky are we? To have a career, to earn a living, and at the same time, help save lives, reconstruct lives and enhance lives.

In the spirit of these words it has been a privilege to serve AHP. I truly care about making sure AHP members have the skills, resources and, most of all, as Mr. Seymour would say, the confidence, and as I like to put it, the courage, to get up every day and do the “stuff” that needs to be done.

I intend to use this award to find new levels of excellence in my work in advancing healthcare philanthropy. And I hope each of you will join me in remembering that each day is a new opportunity to pursue excellence.

I will also use this award to find new ways to serve AHP. For as I mentioned earlier, what this award means to me is what I hope it means to you, that I have served the community of AHP I love so dearly.

Today, in this special room, I am again awash in a lovely warm wave—this time, of joy and of deep gratitude.

Thank you, once again, not from the bottom of my heart, but with my whole heart.