

EDITORIAL

ABOUT DR. GLEN STEELE

Several factors have made Dr. Steele the person he is. Glen was brought up on a farm. He spent many days working in the fields and driving a tractor during his childhood, adolescence and young manhood. He experienced the successes and failures that are inherent in farming. This provided him with a viewpoint that tempers joy and sadness, and victory and defeat. It also brought about an ability to foresee obstacles, accept their existence and plan to overcome them. His upbringing was in an environment that stressed both religious and family values. These provided him with a humbleness, a commitment to loyalty, fairness and family, and a strong desire to be of service to others.

The above factors were instrumental in imbuing him with a desire to learn and to teach. Dr. Steele extended his optometric education at a time when there were few formal post-graduate opportunities in the behavioral/functional aspects of the profession. He attended the Gesell Institute of Child Development in Connecticut and absorbed the teachings, particularly of Drs. Dick Apell and John Streff. This experience was a key factor in developing his philosophy of optometric practice. It was an important credential for his appointment to the faculty of the Southern College of Optometry, a position he has continued to hold with distinction.

When he was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Optometric Extension Program Foundation (OEP) he brought unique qualities and qualifications to that body. Aside from the above attributes, his tenure on the Board of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD) and eventual presidency gave him experience in the workings, and internal and external dynamic aspects of an organization. Further, his time in the volunteer structure of the American Optometric Association (AOA) enabled him to engage in the politics and activities beyond behavioral/functional optometry. However, his dedication to this aspect of the profession never wavered.

Dr. Steele now steps down from the OEP Board and its presidency. In my opinion, his major contribution was to be the guiding light in gaining increased credibility for the organization. This has led to OEP's increasing acceptance and presence as an optometric mainstream organization. Glen's dual roles as private practitioner and optometric educator have been important in this regard: they have provided him with a view that considers and respects the needs and challenges of both of these key elements of the profession. His influence on the other Board members and OEP itself in attaining this increased credibility and mainstream acceptance for the organization cannot be overestimated. Glen's

style of leadership is one of carefully listening to all opinions and then developing an action plan that incorporates the most valuable of what was voiced. As one Board member told me; "Glen brings out the best in all of us."

Dr. Steele has gained significant formal recognition over the past few years for his accomplishments and dedication to optometry. His Guest Editorial in this issue has the flavor of "I stood on the shoulders of those who preceded me and was boosted there by those who were presently with me." While this is not to be disputed, it does not minimize the magnitude of Glen's dedication, accomplishments and contributions to OEP.

Irwin B. Suchoff, O.D., D.O.S.