

# EDITORIAL

## MY FRIEND IRWIN

Irwin Suchoff, O.D., D.O.S., retired as the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Behavioral Optometry (JBO)* at the end of 2007 after publishing 18 volumes. He has earned yet another title: Editor Emeritus. Many of you know and respect Irwin Suchoff, and have known him much longer than I. I am sure that you could wax eloquent about Dr. Suchoff. Others, Dr. A.N. Haffner, Dr. G. T. Steel and Mr. Bob Williams pay tribute to this man in the pages of this issue, but indulge me the personal privilege to honor the founding editor of JBO with a few thoughts of my own.

Those of us who date our professional lives in functional and behavioral optometry back to the late 1960s and 1970s are probably familiar with many of the associates of the Optometric Center of New York. One who stands out is Irwin Suchoff. Since I was practicing in south Mississippi, the Optometric Center of New York and the individuals who practiced in New York seemed very far away, indeed. I am sure that I had seen Dr. Suchoff at one of the OEP or COVD meetings but it was not until I became a faculty member at Northeastern State University-Oklahoma College of Optometry, Tahlequah, OK, and attended a COVD meeting in St. Louis that I actually met him.

Irwin came to Tahlequah soon after that initial meeting in St. Louis. It was at that time that I began to know this man who was to have a profound impact on my life as a colleague, a teacher, a mentor and a friend. We discussed much during those few days in Oklahoma. It was clear that although geography and culture made us different, we shared many of the same values and interests. When my mother, who was living with my family at the time

he visited, told me to bring out the “good scotch,” I knew Irwin was a man of gentility. My mother was a very good judge of character.

My next encounter with Irwin was in 1990 in Monte Carlo, Monaco, at the first International Congress of Behavioral Optometry (ICBO). He was clearly well known in the international optometric community and he was always gracious in introducing me to his friends, some who have now also become dear friends of mine. Soon after that, Irwin recommended me to conduct a seminar in Belgium. My opportunities to travel and teach in Europe might never have happened if it had not been for Dr. Suchoff.

Through the years, our friendship has grown. I have spent time in his home and he in mine. My wife considers him one of our family and I believe that Gloria feels likewise about my family. We share a “daughter” of the profession, Dr. Ilka Nollens of Hasselt, Belgium.

He is truly an esteemed colleague and moreover, a friend. It was, therefore, with some misgiving to me (and I suspect to Irwin as well) that he approached me to be the associate editor of *JBO*. I was certainly under no illusion that there were not better individuals, eminently more qualified than I, to be the associate editor, but I was eager to try. Thanks Irwin, for your confidence in me.

Professionally, Dr. Suchoff has served faithfully in many capacities for 50 or more years. As a practitioner, an educator, a researcher, an advocate for the profession and, most importantly to the patients he has served, Irwin has been and will continue to be a warrior. His service to the Optometric Center of New York, SUNY College of Optometry, the American Op-

tometric Association, New York State Optometric Association, the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry, Council on Optometric Education, Optometric Extension Program Foundation, Eastern States Congress, The American Academy of Optometry, the College of Optometrists in Vision Development and this journal are examples of his service to the profession and society.

This journal would not exist if it were not for Irwin Suchoff. For 18 years, he has worked diligently as its editor, to make it a premier optometric publication. It is therefore with a great deal of humility that I accept the baton of editor of the *JBO*. I can but hope that I will be able to enhance the legacy that he has begun. I stand in awe of Dr. Irwin Suchoff and his lifelong accomplishments; in private practice, academics, professional involvement and editorship.



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