

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
AMERICAN RISK AND INSURANCE ASSOCIATION
AUGUST 1992**

Message from an Old Man

Jerry L. Jorgensen

It is with trepidation that I approach this moment, for, as most of you know, I am the oldest person ever to be elected president of ARIA. For some time some of you have been asking me if I had my address prepared. My answer has usually been, "No, but I have been thinking about it." That is still true! However, there are three areas I wish to address: First, a brief comment on the state of ARIA; second, some insights on being a professional insurance educator; and, third, in response to a number of requests, an explanation of why I moved to Calgary.

The State of ARIA

Someone once said the more things change the more they remain the same. Some thirty years ago when I first joined ARIA, it really had problems. Dennenberg was running on a reform ticket because ARIA's academic membership was down, general membership was down, the organization was low on funds, and we weren't being properly recognized as a profession. (My, how things have changed!) A great deal has changed since then, and yet a lot of our concerns would be minimized if we had more members, more money, and more recognition.

There is one particular group I would solicit your assistance in contacting. That is those former members of ARIA that are not presently active. They may not be here because of a hurt, a slight, a disagreement, or just because of other pressing concerns in their lives. Extend a special hand of friendship to them. We need them as much as they need us.

I promised Travis Pritchett last year that if elected president I would not give a speech talking about the problems of ARIA. Frankly, I don't see these as problems but as opportunities. I intend to share these opportunities with you as we increase membership by providing needed services, raise additional funds by letting our value be known, and by increasing the recognition and stature of ARIA through our individual efforts. The insurance industry and the risk management community stand ready to help us if we will just do our part. Two examples of this are the industry-sponsored programs to teach high school teachers about insurance and The American College's new program to offer CLU credit for approved college courses (contact Gary Stone at the American College if you want to know more about this).

AACSB and ARIA

As indicated yesterday at the business meeting, regarding AACSB I come not to comfort the disturbed, but rather to disturb the comfortable. The exercise in lobbying AACSB for inclusion in the core curriculum was beneficial to ARIA. It gave us focus and brought us together in a common cause. We lost the battle, because they did away with the core. However, there is a window of opportunity for us to win the war.

As Jack Hampton put it, the battleground has moved to the local level. Because there are now more elective offerings, the opportunity is there to add more insurance courses. You must fight for these new offerings. ARIA can't do it for you. ARIA will serve as coordinator and keep you informed of major AACSB changes, but you must personally and individually take the initiative to seize this opportunity.

Jerry Todd and I will continue to monitor AACSB during the transition. Please communicate to Jerry or me any successful wordings of mission statements or cases of where insurance and risk management courses have been maintained or added during an AACSB evaluation.

Insights on Being an Insurance and Risk Management Educator

I included this because it is closest to my heart. Great teachers have had a profound influence on my life. As a very young man, one such teacher brought to my attention a statement of King Solomon, who said, "In all thy getting, get understanding."

It is not enough that we learn or teach just facts or principles. We must help our students to learn to use, to interpret, and to adapt the information we impart to them. There is also a place for ethics and values in our instruction.

A second insight has to do with research and teaching. Contrary to what some would have you believe, there is not a conflict between the two. They are integral parts of being a professor—one that teaches and expands knowledge. To truly be professors we should all be involved in both of these activities. The relative mix is the important consideration. Fortunately, the great universities that I have been associated with have avowed policies that teaching and research be given equal emphasis.

Another great teacher during my early days in college left with me this message, "There is within you all that you can be." Some of us are now great teachers, some are great researchers, others may excel in the service or the administrative elements of our profession. A few will be outstanding in more than one area. Very often the best researchers are also the best teachers. However, we are all different and we each have distinctive strengths and weaknesses. We should first attempt to develop our natural strengths so that we may excel in at least one area and then work diligently to improve our performance in the other areas. If our teaching is not what we would desire, then we should learn from the best teachers and be willing to make the effort to change. If our research is not of the caliber we desire, then we should learn from the best researchers and be willing to put forth the effort to improve. We

must not be discouraged when publishing success is not immediate; rather we should redouble our efforts to produce quality material. If adequate sources for publishing practical research are not available, we may have to develop some additional ones.

However, it is most important for us to recognize that, above all, we must be ourselves. It is not possible for us all to be as handsome as Scott Harrington, as dedicated as Sandra Gustavson, or as suave as Harold Skipper. Yet each of us can make a positive contribution and have an impact on those around us. A professor at one of my alma maters wrote a hundred years ago, "A good teacher is the greatest of musicians and plays on the finest of instruments—the human intellect." We must recognize and help the insurance industry and the risk management community to understand that *students* are our product. To influence the life of one student may well be worth it all.

As insurance professors we can all be known for our integrity and our commitment to the education process and the advancement of knowledge. There is an old Chinese saying which goes like this: "I am fond of fish and bears' paws. If I cannot have both I will give up fish. I am fond of life and of righteousness. If necessary I will give up my life for that which is right."

Pride in Our Profession

We need to feel good about what we are doing as insurance teachers, researchers, and administrators. It is time we stopped feeling inferior to professors in other disciplines. The excellent work that was done recently in making our presentation to AACSB should make us all proud. A strong case was made for the value of risk management in the business school curriculum. An equally strong case can be made for insurance in the curriculum. We are associated with a great industry, an industry that is essential to the transaction of commerce in the economies of the world. We need to continue to work together to get our message out. We must be supportive of each other at our own institutions, within our regions, nationally, and internationally. We must work together to make ARIA even more effective and appreciated in both the business and academic worlds. It is time we crawl out of our shell and take an aggressive approach to seeking our rightful place in business education.

Don't expect ARIA to do this for you. ARIA has neither the time, the staff, nor the money to accomplish this. ARIA as an organization can be helpful by providing coordination, even some leadership, and a forum for the expression of ideas through publications and meeting programs. However, any really significant progress in furthering the profession of insurance education will come from your individual efforts.

To the younger members of ARIA and to those who have recently entered the profession I have some special words. Would those who are attending ARIA for the first time please stand? Would those who have entered the teaching profession during the last ten years please stand and join this group? Look around at each other. You are the future of ARIA. Thank you! Those of us who are a bit more experienced stand ready and willing to help you succeed

in one of the truly great professions. Let us help you to the destiny that is yours. I believe that the future for you is very bright. As an illustration of this and because a number of you have asked, let me tell you the story of how I ended up in Calgary. (Please understand that I am doing this to help the younger members of ARIA to recognize the potential that is theirs and not to promote myself.)

A few years ago a retired insurance broker in Edmonton, Canada, became interested in insurance education. His name is Tony Thibaudeau. He first helped a local Junior College to establish an insurance curriculum working in conjunction with the Canadian equivalent of the American Institute (Insurance Institute of Canada). His interest then turned to getting a bachelor level program for English-speaking Canada. He approached the University of Alberta in Edmonton, but they dismissed him as an insurance man who didn't understand the theoretical world of academia.

Being active in politics, he then approached the Alberta Parliament and sold them on a matching plan to create an endowed chair in insurance and risk management. They agreed to double match what he could raise to a limit. That is, if he could raise \$800,000, they would contribute \$1.6 million, thinking of course, that he didn't have a ghost of a chance of doing that. He teamed up with Dean P. Michael Maher of the University of Calgary to mount a fund-raising program. They wisely made a broad-based appeal. They solicited property/liability insurers, life insurers, property brokers, life agents, national brokerage firms, claims personnel, and risk managers. They were successful in obtaining support from all segments of the industry.

A key turning point came when they traveled 2,000 miles to Toronto to meet with insurance industry leaders. They took with them an Alberta Minister, Elaine McCoy, who very eloquently helped the industry leaders to understand it was to their advantage to participate. As a result of all their efforts, the \$800,000 was raised and matched. They had their \$2.4 million to fund a chair.

They created an Advisory Board composed of leaders from each segment of the industry. They meet twice a year to be of assistance and to give guidance and counsel. The support I have received is just unbelievable.

A number of you visited Calgary, or were visited by those from The University of Calgary. They are most appreciative of the help you gave them.

Last year at ARIA's annual meeting I was contacted by Tony Thibaudeau and Mike Maher. After a few visits to Calgary, some negotiations, counter offers from Utah, and emigration hassles, I arrived in Calgary on March 16 (with LaRae joining me in April).

Why did I leave Utah and my comfort zone after thirty years? It was because I caught Tony and Mike's vision and saw an opportunity to aid in the building of a significant insurance and risk management program in English-speaking Canada. It was a challenge I could not resist.

The bottom line is, simply, if opportunity knocks for an old bounder like me, it certainly does for younger more capable ARIA members like yourselves. I will be there five years and then one of you will probably have the opportunity to continue the building process.

Having addressed the younger members of ARIA, I want to leave a thought for you older members sitting here on the podium. While traveling this summer, LaRae and I stopped at the Festival of the American West in Logan, Utah, and heard an old cowboy read some of his own poetry. I want to share one of these poems with you. It is entitled "Keeping Up" by Don Kennington.*

I shoe horses for a living.
It sure beats a working job,
or sitting at a
big old fancy desk.

I'd rather saddle up and ride
and work a herd of cows,
but things have changed
a lot here in the west.

I haul my shoeing gear around
in the back of a pickup truck,
then drive on to the next place
on the list.

I shoe some pretty good horses,
and the people are awful nice
but it's the old time cowboy life
I really miss.

When I'm going down the road,
the cars go whizzing by.
The drivers frowning
like they are possessed.

Then I'm thinking how much things have changed,
how different people are,
and I'm longing for the old days
of the west.

There used to be the country store,
and the noisy blacksmith shop,
and people used to stop
and visit some.

* "Keeping Up," by Don Kennington, 1992, *Trail Dust III Cowboy Poetry*, (Ogden, Utah: Phil-Don Publishing Co.) pp. 39-42.

But there ain't no time for that
in this modern way of life,
'cause everyone is always
on the run.

Andy now, he's ten years old
and when he's asleep at night
as I'm watching him
a sadness fills my heart.

He'll never sing on night guard,
he'll never rope or brand,
and I'm sorry 'cause
he'll never miss the part.

He'll never doctor a lump jawed cow
or have to pull a calf,
or brand a maverick
out in open space,

Or brush the snow off his saddle
when it's thirty-five below,
or feel the frost
a forming on his face.

They play soccer and there's little leagues
and hot lunch served at school,
and there's Boy Scouts
and there's television too.

But they don't learn to use a pigging string
or lariat or the things
we learned back then
and loved to do.

You just can't fill no other boots,
no matter how you try
excepting them that's
on your own two feet.

You can't relive those olden days.
They're gone and past and done.
The things that happened then
are all complete.

It seems a cowboy's way of life
is fading plumb away
and I guess the saddest parts
for me to see

Is that people, they don't care
and I feel a great despair.
Soon kids will say,
"A cowboy, what is he?"

The cowboy is a dying breed,
I've heard some people say,
like as if we don't belong
here in their land.

We wear hats and boots and spurs
and we use strange words too,
like we say that
"We are riding for the brand."

It's hard to put on paper
the things that's in my heart.
It's just about
impossible it seems.

I keep on writing down
but it's only words I've found
and there ain't no way
that words can feel a dream.

You've got to ride out there yourself.
You've got to face the herd,
accept the cold the thirst,
the dust, the heat.

Love that life more than money.
Love that freedom more than gold,
Sit straight and tall
upon your saddle seat.

I've got a lot of memories
tucked inside my head
and sometimes I go back
and look around.

I take them out in private
and live them once again
and I almost feel and smell
and hear the sounds.

Most folks wonder why
a cowboy loves a life like that.
If I was them I guess
I'd wonder too.

But it forms there in your blood
just like water forms the mud
and it's something
that a cowboy has to do.

I have loved this profession and continue to...
It's been good to me and will be to you.

May your professional life be as fulfilling as mine is my wish for all of you.
Thank you.

Copyright of Journal of Risk & Insurance is the property of Blackwell Publishing Limited. The copyright in an individual article may be maintained by the author in certain cases. Content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.