

1983 PRESIDENTIAL ACCEPTANCE SPEECH<sup>1</sup>

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It is with a great deal of honor and (at the same time) humility that I stand before you accepting the assignment of serving as your President for 1983–84. As probably occurred in the case of each of the people who preceded me in assuming this important position within AMCA, I found, in preparing myself for this day, that I could not help but to reflect on my professional history and how I view the role that AMCA and its membership have played in my professional development.

When I started out in actual mosquito work in 1965, I was a lowly 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Chemical Corps, equipped with a B.S. degree in Entomology from the University of Idaho and assigned to the Ecology and Epidemiology Branch at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah. It was my responsibility to oversee the field investigations sponsored by the Army on the epidemiology of mosquito-borne diseases in the western deserts of Utah. At this time in my professional life, I viewed AMCA as my most important source of information regarding a group of insects which I knew very little about. *Mosquito News* was my Bible; and it was in this journal that I published my first technical article of my professional career (near the end of my tour of active duty). During the Army phase of my professional career, I did not actively participate in the meetings or other activities of the Association but, through my joining the Association (my first one by the way) and reading its journal, I became impressed with the Association's unique blend of information sources among its membership and contributions to its journal; i.e., the operational aspects of mosquito and mosquito-borne disease control were represented as well as the fundamental and applied scientific aspects of this important field of endeavor.

By the time I completed my 2-year obligation to Uncle Sam as "an officer and a gentleman," I had decided that the biology, ecology, vector-role and control of mosquitoes held enough fascination for me to have the "guts" to enter a graduate-training program under Dr. William R. Horsfall at the University of Illinois in 1967. Anyone familiar with Dr. Horsfall knows what I mean when I say "guts." I found shortly after

my arrival at Illinois that mere fascination with mosquitoes was not enough to "survive" under this man—total commitment and devotion to the learning of all the facets surrounding the bionomics of mosquitoes better describes how a graduate student "survived" under the William R. Horsfall-method of student training; and "survive" I did and I *prospered* as well.

Thanks to Dr. Horsfall, I finally started the process of thinking less like a human and more like a mosquito. Throughout the graduate-student phase of my professional life, AMCA, through its journal and other publications, continued to be a major source of information for my research project as well as for my gaining a better understanding of mosquitoes in general. Thus, I was still a "user" of AMCA and my debt to this association was continuing to mount.

Upon completing my degree requirements at Illinois in 1971, I secured a teaching and research position on the faculty of the Department of Entomology at Texas A&M University, a position that I hold to this day. My teaching responsibilities at A&M initially centered on the instruction of undergraduate students in the principles of Veterinary Entomology; but as I rose through the ranks toward my present position of Professor, I taught virtually every undergraduate and graduate course that our Department offers in the area of Medical as well as Veterinary Entomology; and taught not only in the College of Agriculture but in the A&M College of Veterinary Medicine as well. Again, in the accomplishment of certain of these teaching responsibilities, I found the information supplied by AMCA to be invaluable references.

Information supplied by AMCA also served as the base for the research and graduate training program that I established at A&M. As many of you know, my research program centers on the study and control of mosquito populations associated with agricultural wetlands, with riceland mosquito populations being the principal group that I and my students have focused on over the past 12 years.

It was in 1972 that I finally had my first opportunity (most importantly, the financial support) to attend an AMCA meeting. Indeed, it was the last meeting (before this one) held jointly with the Florida Anti-Mosquito Association, the meeting in Miami. During the course of participating in the Miami meeting I came to

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realize another important contribution that AMCA was going to make to my professional life, aside from all the information being supplied by its members through publications and presentations. AMCA also afforded me the chance to meet and interact directly with key vector biology and disease control experts from all over the world. Indeed, over the years, AMCA has been the primary means by which I have made contact with persons that could aid and advise me in my professional endeavors; and just as importantly, it is through AMCA that I met some of the best personal friends that anyone could ever ask for.

In 1973, I decided that it was time for me to start paying back AMCA for all the professional services and support that it had given me. In this regard, I volunteered to serve on the AMCA Public Relations Committee with such notables as Harry Pratt and Claude Schmidt at the helm of this committee. In 1978 I took on the position of Chairman of the Public Relations Committee and assumed, after serving 2 years as the Chairman of this committee, that my continued service to AMCA would be relegated back to serving as a member of another committee or in any other capacity that the AMCA leadership saw fit. However, such was not to be the case. Two things happened in quick succession; first, 1980-81 President Bob Washino approached me as to my willingness to head up and organize the newly established Scientific and Operational Liaison Committee (now known as the Scientific and Regulatory Liaison Committee). Secondly, Glenn Stokes as Chairman of the AMCA Nominating Committee asked me if nominated and elected would I serve as the *Vice President* of AMCA, a position, Glenn noted, which was usually the first step to eventually becoming the President of the Association. My answer to both Bob and Glenn regarding their respective requests was a simple "yes" but, I can remember that in both cases, I was overwhelmed by the thought of getting so deeply involved with the affairs and operation of the Association. Certainly, I felt, there were so many others within the Association who were more qualified and better able to accomplish what was being asked of me; but "ego will out," I decided to accept both positions if that is what the leadership and membership of AMCA wanted and so I did . . . "accept": that is.

I guess I must have served well in both capacities because now you have bestowed upon me the highest position and honor that AMCA can give to one of its members. But once again, I find myself a bit overwhelmed by it all. Quite honestly, my initial plan in becoming involved with AMCA was to pay back the Association a little for what all it and its members had given

me over the years of my professional life. Also, through my publications in *Mosquito News* and my involvement in committee work with AMCA, I hoped to gain some degree of respect and confidence in who I am as a professional from the group of people whom I consider my most immediate peers. The last thing I expected was to be standing here as I am now, accepting the responsibility of serving as the President of the primary Association of my peer group. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to further serve the Association, and also I thank all my friends, mentors of my life and my graduate students, without whose assistance and support over the years, I do not feel all of what has transpired in my professional life would have been possible.

Now with that being said; what about 1983 . . . ? (i.e.; the "what am I gonna do" part of this speech). Well, I'm not "gonna do" much without the full support of all of you sitting in this room, nor am I "gonna do" much without the full support and active involvement of the rest of the membership of the Association and its officers.

The primary thing that I've learned about AMCA and its operation over the past 3 years, as I worked my way from Vice President to what I am about to become today, is that the strength and continued advancement of the Association lies in the hands of the general membership. Officers cannot lead, if the membership is unwilling to follow; committees will not function unless the membership is willing to devote time and service to these committees; and Association programs and activities will fall "flat on their face" without the support and involvement of the general membership.

Assuming that each and everyone of you in this room today (as well as the rest of the AMCA membership) will get involved and support AMCA in anyway that you can, I submit the following items that I would like to see accomplished by "us" (i.e., you, me and the rest of the officers) during the next year:

I would like to see us:

1. Continue to work with and assist Tommy Mulhern, Jim Caton, Linda Raiche and the rest of the Central Office staff in their efforts to maintain a business operation which is as efficient and cost effective as possible.
2. Continue to seek better ways for AMCA to serve its members and their professional commitment to the study and control of vectors and the disease agents that they bear.
3. Continue efforts to streamline the committee structure of the Association

and give each committee a clearer set of responsibilities and assignments; such that each AMCA Committee can be more productive and responsive to the needs of the Association and its members, and

4. Strengthen the role and purpose of Regional Directors of AMCA in the affairs of the Association.

Of a more specific nature, I want us (as an association) to:

1. Throw our weight and support behind the Public Information Committee's efforts to get the long awaited movie on mosquito control completed.
2. Fully support the newly-formed Training Committee in its effort to conduct the first AMCA "Training Course on Mosquito Biology and Control" which has been tentatively scheduled for 22-26 August 1983 in St. Paul, Minnesota.
3. Ask the Association's Central Office Committee to proceed with the development of an AMCA Handbook, which can be made available to each and every member of the Association and which can be used by each member as a ready reference about the Association: regarding its purpose, its function and its organization and its operation.

4. Work with the Worldwide Committee in strengthening AMCA's image on the international scene and to update the Worldwide Consultant List that was published by this committee in 1981-82.

5. Urge the Bylaws Committee to accelerate its work on the general revision and update of AMCA's Bylaws, and to

6. Assist the AMCA Membership Committee any way that we can in recruiting new members and to keep the ones we have now.

Again, I note here that without our membership and their support, AMCA would cease not only to function but, actually, would cease to exist. Thus, in closing, I urge each and everyone of you to join me and the rest of the officers of AMCA in strengthening our membership roles and otherwise, to assist us in anyway that you can in seeing that the Association as a whole continues to grow and get stronger. It *is* your association and through your contributions and service, it *will become* the Association that you want it to be.

Thank you again, for selecting me as your President for 1983-84. I accept the challenge; but, will acknowledge the "honor" that goes with the position only after I have proven to you that I met the challenge and succeeded.