



**Remarks by Joseph G. Valentino at the  
Closing Reception, March 12, 2005**

First, I need to express my appreciation to the officers and the members of the Board of Trustees for this special honor and recognition at this reception. It is truly exceptional.

In a sense, it is fitting that this occasion be held in this building as when I first started working for USP and we were exploring the initiation and development of new programs we were often challenged or various legal questions were raised such as were we acting beyond our legal scope or would there be increased liability exposure for participants or conflict with existing laws, etc. In any case, I would often come to the Law Library of the Library of Congress to do my research. At that time, the law library was located fittingly on the second floor in the corner next to the rare books section and in those pre-computer days I would usually spend hours rummaging through the dusty files and stacks searching for foreign, federal, or state statutes and regulations or cases starting in the early 1800's.

But, lest I give you the wrong impression, the USP is not just about charters or legal recognition or legal technicalities, it is about people. One hundred and eighty five years ago, in that building across the street, the United States Capitol, in the old Senate Chamber, eleven physicians braved the January cold and met as delegates to help resolve the problems with the medicines of their day for what was then their world, the twenty two states recently united. They appointed a Committee on Publication and then returned to their homes agreeing to be bound by its determinations.

This week, you the professional descendants of these eleven physicians have similarly been meeting as representatives to help resolve the somewhat broader and more complex problems for your world as you lead the USP into this new global century.

You have elected a board, and scientists and other experts to carry out the work, and tomorrow you will adopt resolutions to give them direction. Unlike in 1820, we are fortunate today to have a knowledgeable and sizable staff to assist these volunteer experts in their deliberations. But the basic concept remains the same, elected volunteers are the principle makers of the decisions by which we will be bound.

I have been fortunate to have been part of this compendial process for seven quinquennia or in human terms for over 35 years—first in an administrative-legal capacity and then as General Counsel and Secretary.

Many people have asked me how I could have worked for one organization for such a long period of time in this day and age, but every time I thought I might want to search for something different, I couldn't think of any place where the work was more challenging, varied, or the results so satisfying.

Unlike most attorneys, I have been fortunate to have had three bosses—now personal friends—who have allowed me to utilize both my pharmacy and legal background to conceive of, participate in, and work on programs designed to improve the public health. I have had the honor of working and associating with some of the brightest scientists and practitioners in the pharmacy and medical fields on the then, Committee of Revision-now the Council of Experts and the Board of Trustees.

For over 25 years I have liaised with motivated public servants in the FDA, state boards of pharmacy and other government agencies and worked with members of the pharmaceutical industry. And I have always been surrounded by staff more intelligent and capable than I to make me look good.

I have been blessed with a devoted supportive wife, with two caring children of whom I am extremely proud, and a loving family and friends, many of whom are here tonight.

I thank you all for making this possible.