

EDITORIAL

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View from the Pyramids: On Becoming an FAAO

In this issue of *The AAO Journal*, we celebrate the recent FAAO accomplishments of Dr. Lewis, Dr. Heineman and Dr. Torres. We at *AAOJ* applaud the work of the Committee on Fellowship in the AAO and these outstanding recent FAAOs to work towards the betterment of osteopathy.

The commitment to undergo the rigors of the FAAO process is something that many aspire to achieve, but few finish. I became an FAAO in 2016, and it was one of the highlights of my career. Why did I choose to undergo the rigors of the FAAO process on top of the day-to-day tasks of a busy osteopathic physician's life? I chose this path as the apex of challenging myself to be the best physician I can be, to commit to "paying it forward" to the profession and to students, and to finding out just how far I could take my skills. It was worth every minute spent pursuing this goal.

In my early career, I looked up to the amazing FAAOs who presented at "Evening With the Stars" at the annual AAO Convocation. I was in awe of how they could know exactly where the problem area was in the patient, and knew exactly what to do for this area. It was a mystery still to me, and my curious mind needed to know more. I followed the careers of Viola Frymann, Robert Fulford, Edna Lay, and others who had influenced me to be the best I could be. I felt like I could never reach the level of skill they had achieved—until I underwent the FAAO process and proved to myself that I could. Though no one can fill the big shoes of the "greats," we can make our mark for the next generation in other ways. I am, and always have been, my own worst critic. I needed this process to look back and say I am actually skilled enough to be an FAAO.

Nowadays, the busy physician may just wish to "do enough" to get by, not strive for the metaphoric brass ring on the carousel. I would encourage you to prove

to yourself you ARE worth adding those letters to the DO at the end of your name. It will be the apogee of your career and a point of celebration. I was fortunate to have a great mentor who pushed me on when I wanted to quit, and who likewise said the effort was worth the end goal.



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If you are thinking of challenging yourself to be the best osteopathic physician, teacher, and scholar you can be, please reach out to be connected to an FAAO mentor. These mentors have themselves gone through the process and can help you to hone your ideas, and walk you step by step through the process. They are your biggest cheerleader, and will bolster you when the task seems too daunting. The committee is there to help support you on your journey as well and can connect you with individuals willing to serve as mentors. Robert Kessler, DO, who wrote the article "Why I became an FAAO," can serve as a point of contact as well.

Mediocrity is not what AT Still stood for, and if he were alive today, he would be pushing you as well. He pushed his student to "do better, dig deeper" and often planted the seeds that later became new techniques. The works of Charlotte Weaver, DO, FACN, N and William G. Sutherland, DO exemplify AT Still's planting the seed of an idea. Who is the mentor for you who will plant that seed and watch it bloom into a fully fledged idea, research project, new technique or education reform process that will help you reach your goals? Find that person and invite them to sit down to a cup of coffee to formulate a plan. You are worth the effort. ■