What a tremendous honor to have been selected the 2013 John W. Webb Lecture Honoree. I am truly humbled to have been included among the past recipients of this honor, who are men and women of great insight and leadership in our profession. I want to thank the ASHP Section of Pharmacy Practice Managers Selection Committee for this designation and the faculty and staff of Northeastern University School of Pharmacy for inviting me to be with you today.

I especially want to thank Dr. Bill and Sharon Gouveia and Dean Jack Reynolds for their warm hospitality over the last several days.

It is a special delight that several of the past Webb Lecture honorees are able to join us today for the program. Thank you for being here to share this special time. Among them are two men who have contributed to my professional maturation in special ways: Dr. Max D. Ray and William A. Zellmer. Max Ray was my first pharmacy practice residency program director at the Medical University of South Carolina somewhere back in the antiquity of both our lives. Bill Zellmer’s wisdom and prodding, shared through his editorials, particularly those focused on ethical practice issues, have helped me to see around the corner. Many others—colleagues, staff, students, residents, friends, and family—have contributed greatly to the thoughts formed over a lifetime that I want to share with you today. I thank them for the impact that they have made on my life.

Excellence in pharmacy practice management and leadership, the subject of the Webb Lecture series, is a meaningful topic to me. Excellence makes a difference in all things. It makes a difference in the products we buy, in the drugs we prescribe and administer, and in the care that we provide in our hospitals. Excellence in pharmacy leadership sets the tone and direction of our professional practice. Excellence makes the difference.

I have chosen to take a bit different tack today as I talk with you on the subject “The Essence of Leadership.” I want to focus not on the elements of leadership, not on the essentials of leadership, but rather on the essence of leadership. So let me define my meaning and purpose in selecting this word: essence.

I like to use a thesaurus. I have found that using one can enrich the understanding and application of the English language by flavoring the words that we select to convey new meaning in the expression of thoughts. If you examine the word “essence” in Roget’s International Thesaurus, you will find other words that can be interchanged, like substance, stuff, quintessence, elixir, flower, and fragrance. I want to use the concept of flower and its aroma—specifically fragrance—as I characterize the essence of leadership. I have chosen this concept because I believe that substantive and meaningful leadership has a positive formative effect on those who are under the authority of leaders who display the characteristics that I want to share with you. Leaders impact lives. Their leadership should be a fresh and pleasant fragrance on the lives of others.

Although philosophy is not the subject or intended context of the discussion today, I want to ask a question that might appear to be a philosophical one: “What is man?” What are the things that make us who we are? Certainly they are not...
how we look, what we possess, where we live, or our position in life. These things may be important but are temporal. They pass away with time and circumstance. Often their passing is over a lifetime. Sometimes their passing is sudden, with the occurrence of disease, death, loss of a job, or the sudden loss of a possession like a home, as has been the case of many in recent months from acts of nature. Our bodies and possessions are not permanent. We are temporary beings; our possessions are just things. All of what we are and have, except our spirit, will pass away with time.

The essence, the substance of man, then, is spiritual. All of the religions of the world teach the eternalness, the permanency of the spirit. The attributes of leadership that I want to discuss with you have a spiritual connotation. The essence, the fragrance, of leadership exists in the living out of spiritual qualities as we fulfill our leadership responsibilities in pharmacy, our community, our families—in all aspects of our lives. These characteristics have moral equivalency and are consistent with the contention of Elliott’s\(^4\) assessment of the future of the profession in his 1940s survey report, in which he said that “the outstanding factor determining the future of the profession of pharmacy is fundamentally moral in nature.”

I want to discuss six attributes that comprise the essence of leadership: blessing, responsibility, sacrifice, privilege, forgiveness, and servanthood. When taken collectively and found in a leader, they leave a pleasant and refreshing fragrance on the lives of those who are led and may have the potential to change their lives forever.

These attributes influence the way leaders present themselves and perform their functions on a daily basis and throughout their lifetime. They are evidence of a leader’s moral compass—a reasoned set of beliefs about what is moral and what is right. Bill Zellmer\(^4\) instructs us that these beliefs are central to the core of our humanity.

**Leadership is blessing**

What do I reference when I speak of blessing? The thesaurus gives words like good, benefit, welfare, good fortune, godsend, gift, and favor for the word blessing.

Leadership is a blessing for those who are chosen to lead. Leaders are among the few (less than 1% of the people in a unit, organization, hospital, country—you name it) are leaders. Leaders have special status and perks associated with their position. Leaders have positional authority. Zellmer\(^4\) suggests that we as pharmacists have been blessed with many gifts—gifts from loved ones who supported our education; gifts from society at large, which made higher education accessible; gifts from teachers and mentors who imparted their knowledge and wisdom; gifts from leaders who we have never met who made pharmacy a better profession than they found it. These words are especially true for pharmacy leaders. As a result, Zellmer suggests that we have an obligation to use these gifts wisely and toward a purpose greater than our own comfort and well-being.

But more importantly, a leader can and should be a blessing for those to whom he or she is in authority. Leaders are equipped and positioned to spread good and better the welfare of those they lead. As leaders, we have been richly blessed and as such are called to share our gifts, talents, and experiences with others.

Leaders should **direct** blessings and **be a blessing** to those for whom...
Leadership

we are responsible. Leaders are to multiply and pass on blessings for our people as well as the entity within which we practice. How does a pharmacy leader do these things for his or her staff and organization?

A primary way, perhaps the most important, is an active and sustained commitment to mentoring, supporting, and cultivating young pharmacists who are within our sphere of influence, both in our own institutions as well as more broadly outside of our institutions. I will discuss mentorship more thoroughly below.

How can we build others up? We do this by celebrating their victories and their accomplishments. So look for the good in others and celebrate the good that you find. When we do, we are a powerful force of encouragement in the world . . . and a worthy blessing to our staff.

It is especially important that we find ways to ensure that support needed for the development of our staff and younger leaders is provided, including financial and other resources needed for clinical program development that can sustain and advance practice initiatives that are in the best interest of patients served in the institution. Delegating responsibilities to subordinates who have potential (whether they want the responsibility or not), allowing them to experiment, and holding them up when they stumble or even fail bless them. Giving them responsibilities that can develop them and make them stronger versus those that simply lighten our load is the right thing to do. Giving recognition and credit for their achievement, particularly to organizational leadership, enhances the blessing.

The watershed Hilton Head Conference correctly placed the director of pharmacy at the center of the hub of responsibility for the development and direction of growth for clinical programs. Leaders provide the opportunity for good fortune when they create a rich and fertile environment for innovation in program and service development. Most of us are products of our upbringing; I certainly am. I have fond memories of the “Big Blue Farm” on which I grew up professionally. I am speaking of my Pharm.D. training and clinical pharmacy residency at the University of Kentucky, where the chief horticulturalist, Paul F. Parker, director of pharmacy, cultivated marvelous new interventions in patient care, theories of practice, and models of care delivery, and where future academic and organizational leaders were planted, fertilized, pruned, harvested, and then shipped to market around the world during his tenure. Parker blessed those he led. He was a blessing to the University of Kentucky and patients treated in its hospitals. He was a blessing to the profession of pharmacy.

Leadership is privilege

The thesaurus gives words like right, license, special favor, and indulgence as synonyms for the word privilege. Although I cannot back this belief up with hard statistical facts, I would venture to say that many, perhaps most, of the outstanding leaders in American history and of current time, regardless of the profession or discipline including pharmacy, were not people of privilege. More often than not, they came from modest backgrounds but rose to substantive positions of authority from which they did great good and led much change that bettered many people. Abraham Lincoln is a classic example.

When viewed in the context in which I am couching my comments today, leadership is a privilege, not an entitlement. It is not uncommon that persons may be given leadership responsibilities before they have substantially proved themselves. The leadership position is not always a deserved role—leaders may not have necessarily done something to merit the role.

On the other hand, the person placed in the leadership position will have usually demonstrated important skills before being made the leader; communication, organizational ability, coaching, development of others, planning, and decision making are some of these skills. However, leadership is much, much more than a skill set. Lots of people—athletes, orators, teachers, and many others—have skills, yet they may not be leaders.

What do I mean by the assertion that leadership is a privilege? Some of my colleagues provided insight that resonates with me. I particularly like the analogy expressed by Ken Jozefczyk (personal communication, Director of Pharmacy, Memorial Health University Medical Center, Savannah, GA; 2013 Jul 25). Ken stated, “When I think of a privilege, I think of a special right or advantage. For some reason the image that comes to mind is the privilege parents give to teenagers when they toss them the keys to the car. To be a leader is similar. We are essentially given the keys to drive the car. In our case, that means the special right to set direction for pharmacy practice and medication use.” He went on to say, “Leadership also involves the extension of the privilege to others. Perhaps what I am saying is that there is a privilege of empowerment that is part of leadership. Leadership involves the special right to let others lead. So a key component of leadership is not only acknowledging the privilege but sharing it.”

Leadership is a privilege to better the lives of others. It is not a license to seek personal aggrandizement, satisfy personal gain, or profit. Achievement, recognition, and monetary gain may result from leadership responsibilities, but these outcomes should not—cannot—be the primary objective.

A trap of a leadership position is the possibility of leaders starting to think they are special, that they have
earned and deserve people’s respect, that they have a lot to offer. This kind of thinking can result in pride. We are reminded in Scripture that “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18).

Leadership is responsibility

I believe an important read for you is Bill Zellmer’s Webb Lecture, “Reason and History as Guides for Hospital Pharmacy Practice Leaders.” In his lecture, he used the example of Abraham Lincoln and content taken from a book by William Lee Miller on the moral compass that guided Lincoln through one of the most difficult times in our nation’s history. Lincoln was a man of deep beliefs of what is moral and what is right. These beliefs sustained him and guided his actions as he carried out his responsibility as President of the United States.

The position of leader in the profession of pharmacy requires integrity, honesty, high principles, sound character, and moral strength. We live in a world and work in practice environments where the foundations upon which decisions are based shift as sands with the ebb and flow of the tides. This means we often find ourselves in an arbitrary environment where decisions are being predicated solely on financial performance, loudness or shrillness in argumentative voices, position within organizational leadership, or whim of the majority of the day. Regardless of what you may think of George W. Bush as a President, he stated that “leadership requires vision and principle” and “leaders are defined by the convictions they hold.”

Toby Clark, in his Webb Lecture last year, characterized pharmacy leaders as “leaders of healers” and said that the greatest leadership sin is to remain passive in the face of challenges. We are leaders of healers! What a special and significant role in society that is! We have a compact with society and the patients we serve. Our compact is covenantal, the elements of which are based on moral obligations and virtues intended to protect and respect our patients and colleagues and benefit society.

Bill Zellmer lamented that “in the halls of pharmacy academia and within the reaches of experiential education, there seems to be only spotty allusion to the moral precepts that should inspire us to assertively advance pharmacy practice beyond the status quo.” I contend that our moral responsibility as pharmacy leaders is to stand the test of trustworthiness and credibility by doing the right thing, especially when there is a cost or consequence. Leaders must be committed to being trustworthy even when it is hard, even when there is a price to pay. Mark Twain wrote, “Always do right. This will please some people and astonish the rest.” Zellmer reminded us that the pharmacy practitioner is the atom—the irreducible element—of pharmacy practice. The choices we make as individual pharmacists and pharmacy leaders ultimately chart the course of the profession.

Leadership is sacrifice

Leadership has a price. You take the heat—a lot. You must be willing to take responsibility for poor decisions made under your authority and correct them but do so with wisdom and firmness but humility. “The buck stops here,” said a sign on the desk of Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States.

My friend Burnis Breland reminded me that leadership is not always safe. We may be required to take risky positions, roles or actions that, even when advanced in the right spirit and with the right intent, yield undesired outcomes.

Sara White’s work, done while she served as the 2004 ASHP scholar in residence, indicated a coming crisis in the lack of sufficient numbers of pharmacy leaders in the decade that followed. We are reaching the end of that decade now. In spite of ASHP’s leadership development programs, such as the annual leadership conference and the Center forLeadership Development, as well as other practice-based training and residency programs, the number of individuals prepared to assume vacancies in key leadership positions is barely sufficient. While significant progress has been made in the development of residency programs in the last five years, the results of the 2013 ASHP Resident Matching Program indicate that 1614 of the 4480 participating applicants (36%) did not match with a postgraduate year 1 or 2 residency.

I do not believe that we, as today’s leaders, have taken the appropriate measure of responsibility for this shortcoming. Many of us are failing to contribute an important gift and blessing to the profession by slacking in the tithe of our talent and time. We are failing in our stewardship responsibility. This tithe is known as mentoring.

Paul Pierpaoli, in his insightful commentary from the 1992 National Residency Preceptors Conference, instructed us that mentorship is a labor of love that requires self-denial, courage, time, and altruism. This means that it is a sacrifice, but it is a worthy sacrifice. He went on to say, “Effective mentors are authentic individuals. They have learned that success begins with a knowledge of self. They do not seek authority from others; they realize that it emanates from within. They are true ‘originals.’”

Pierpaoli directed us to the words of his mentor Don Francke, who said, “It is the preceptor (mentor) who sets the tone of the training program. He accomplishes this by what he does personally, by what he stands for, by the contributions he makes to his profession, by his actions, and by his sense of values. The religious precept that one must lose himself to find himself is certainly true of the preceptor.”
Pierpaoli\textsuperscript{15} reminded us that mentors may be the guiding force that helps shape the future of the resident’s professional life and, as such, the mentor’s mantle is one of the highest callings of our profession and humanity.

I am reminded by my friend and mentor Max Ray,\textsuperscript{17} in his comments to graduating medical students, that “wisdom is accrued gradually, if at all, from life experiences . . . [and] involves the ability to unlearn and relearn and to make judgments in the face of insufficient, inconclusive, or contradictory information . . . .” Wisdom comes also from the recognition of the limitations of one’s own abilities and in knowing when to seek counsel from others. The wise man or woman, then, seeks wise counsel. The resulting wisdom—the shared wisdom, if you will of two wise people—is always greater than that which either alone could provide.” Max spoke these words in the context of interdisciplinary reliance of physicians on the skills and knowledge of clinical pharmacists. However, its application to the mutual bond between a mentor and a younger colleague is appropriate.

**Leadership is forgiveness**

Why is forgiveness essential to the essence, the fragrance of leadership? Both the asking for forgiveness and the giving of forgiveness are important. Leaders are in positions exposed to the probability of intentional and unintentional hurt from those to whom they are in authority. Leadership decisions are misunderstood daily by subordinates because of incomplete and/or inaccurate information. Leaders do and say things that are perceived as hurtful in spite of the fact that they were not intended as such.

Human beings are exceptionally imperfect; that is one of the downsides of our uniqueness. To forgive others is difficult. Being frail, fallible, and imperfect, we are quick to anger, quick to blame, slow to forgive, and even slower to forget.

Michael Hyatt,\textsuperscript{18} the chief executive officer of Thomas Nelson Publishers, has observed that when the leader is hurt, he or she often lies awake at night and stews about things. It is important to recognize that forgiveness is not an emotion; it is a decision and must be a principle in the leader’s life. We must consistently make the decision to forgive an offense until our emotions align with the decision we have made. Without a forgiving spirit, our actions and expressions are often dominated by stress and resentment of which we are unaware.

Leaders make mistakes, lots of them. When a leader makes a mistake, a carefully worded, heartfelt apology is fundamentally important to make things right. An inappropriate comment, an unwise association, or a bad attitude can have unintended, unfortunate, and crippling consequences. When there is trouble because of a leader’s choice, the one thing that can often repair the damage is a specific request for forgiveness.\textsuperscript{19}

On the other hand, the leader has to remember that life is *not judged by a moment.* We do not destroy our leadership capacity or potential by a single unfortunate event. We make mistakes. We fail. We fall. But, we can recover from our errors. We grow from them and move on. A pitcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates in the 1950s and 1960s by the name of Vernon Law said, “Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward.”\textsuperscript{20}

John Maxwell\textsuperscript{21} told us, “Every great company, every great brand, and every great career is built bit by bit, step by step, little by little.” Much of the building that happens as we move through life comes from thoughtful introspection and wise counsel about how we should have handled certain issues versus how we actually handled them. Personal and career growth—certainly wisdom—come this way: little by little.

**Leadership is servanthood**

Much has been written and expressed about servant leadership. Robert K. Greenleaf\textsuperscript{22} first coined the term in an essay he published in 1970 and from which he developed the Center for Servant Leadership. A number of authors and advocates of servant leadership have contributed to the concept over the last four decades, including Ken Blanchard,\textsuperscript{23} Stephen Covey,\textsuperscript{24} Larry Spears,\textsuperscript{25} and others.

The servant leader is one who wants to serve, and to serve first. A conscious choice to aspire to lead follows the initial choice to serve. This type of leader is very different from one who desires to be the leader first. There is agreement that certain characteristics are central to the core of a servant leader:\textsuperscript{26}

- **Listening**—A servant leader is motivated to listen actively to subordinates and support them in decision identification and pays attention to what remains unspoken, particularly to body language.
- **Empathy**—He attempts to understand and empathize with others and considers his workers as people who need respect and appreciation for their personal development.
- **Healing**—A servant leader helps people solve their problems and conflicts in relationships.
- **Awareness**—He has the ability to view situations from a more integrated, holistic position and has a better understanding about ethics and values.
- **Persuasion**—A servant leader tries to convince those he manages versus taking advantage of power and status by coercing compliance.
- **Conceptualization**—He thinks beyond day-to-day realities, has the ability to see beyond the limits of the operating business, and focuses on long-term goals.
- **Foresight**—A servant leader has the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation.
- **Stewardship**—He sees an obligation to help and serve others.
• Committed to the growth of people—A servant leader is convinced that people have intrinsic value beyond their contribution as workers.
• Builds community—He builds strong community within the organization.

This type of leader in any organization is highly valued and is a leader among leaders. While I have encountered some servant leaders in the profession of pharmacy during my life, I have been most touched by a very humble, simple priest by the name of Fray José Contran, director of the Obras Sociales del Hermano Pedro in Antigua, Guatemala. Some of you know of my involvement in a medical mission program called Faith in Practice medical missions (Houston, TX; www.faithinpractice.org). We serve the indigent people of Guatemala by providing surgical, medical, dental, and other health care services; thousands of people—who would otherwise go untreated in this country, which is one of the poorest in the world—receive care every year.

Fray Contran is the administrative director of the hospital in which we work in Guatemala. He also ministers to the spiritual needs of the patients and multitudes of physically and mentally disabled residents of the Obras. Early in my experience as a medical missionary to Guatemala, Fray Contran conducted a foot-washing ceremony for the members of my medical team; he did this as an act of gratitude for our service to his people. This ceremony was the most moving experience of my life. His example as the humble servant leader demonstrates the important trait of humility in the servant leader.

In recent correspondence with Burnis Breland (personal communication, 2013 Aug 1) about the subject of leadership, he used the words higher calling to characterize the context and purpose of privilege in leadership. If you know Burnis, then you know him to be a man of deep spiritual conviction. The higher calling of a leader is to be a servant to those he or she leads. We are to give of ourselves, our time, and our talents to the benefit of those we lead.

The characteristics of the servant leader in many ways encompass the other attributes that I mentioned earlier. When found in a pharmacy leader, they are always associated with personal and professional success. They are embodied in a person of wisdom, who is “like a tree planted by rivers of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers” (Psalms 1:3).

Leadership, mortality, and legacy

Present in this Webb Lecture audience are many current and future leaders of pharmacy. Some, perhaps most, have had thoughts about their mortality; certainly I have, particularly in recent months.

A little over two years ago, my wife Kay was diagnosed with breast cancer. Some of you in the audience understand the effect of a cancer diagnosis on your psyche. Others of you who are spouses or companions of loved ones who get this diagnosis understand how it changes your life forever. Kay is a cancer survivor; we are thankful that her surgery and chemotherapy have been successful and that today she is cancer free. She has been blessed with the privilege to counsel, pray, and share hope with other ladies who have been given this devastating news.

Kay’s breast cancer had a profound effect on me in ways that I have been unable to meaningfully articulate. We have been married for almost 40 years; in many ways we truly are one. The possibility of separation through death was very uncomfortable for me to contemplate. The uncertainty about the future that accompanies a cancer diagnosis resulted in my giving a great deal of thought about life, its meaning, and its purpose. Some of this thought applied to my professional responsibilities as a leader, to my own mortality, and to the legacy that I will leave in my family, as well as my practice.

As one approaches the end of a career, questions about how he or she will be remembered as a leader and as a person come to mind. David Kvancz,27 in his Webb Lecture, accurately asserted that at the end of your career, those who knew you will likely remember you not for the innovative systems or programs that you implemented but for how you treated people with whom you were associated.

Our legacy is what will be remembered about us after we pass out of this world. It is what we do and are today that will be regarded as important enough to be thought of and remembered in the future. I believe that while this may include things that we build, develop, or implement, more than any of these it will be our character—it will be the essence of who we were as leaders.

Franklin Graham28 said, “Character is built slowly over a lifetime. It is the sum of every right decision, every honest word, every noble thought, and every heartfelt prayer. It is forged on the anvil of honorable work and polished by the twin virtues of generosity and humility. Character is a precious thing—difficult to build but easy to tear down . . . . Our life pursuits will reflect our character and personal integrity.”

The essence, the fragrance, of leadership is built upon the foundation of character.

Influence of others

At a recent conference that I attended, the audience was challenged by the speaker to identify the five most influential people in our lives. I have given a lot of thought to that challenge over the last several months as I prepared my thoughts for this event. Three people have immeasurably influenced who I am as a person: Jesus Christ, my dad, and my wife Kay.

Two others have had great influence on my professional life. I have
acknowledged one of those individuals several times today: Max Ray, my first residency preceptor at the Medical University of South Carolina, a man who all of you know through his words on paper and his stewardship and leadership in the profession. His crystal-clear thinking and ability to express thoughts in a way that grabs the imagination have benefited us all. Max tutored and guided a number of residents in the South Carolina program and then moved to Washington to direct the ASHP residency initiative. Later he greatly influenced pharmacy practice in California as a practice leader and dean of a newly founded college of pharmacy. But his mentoring of me over 35 years in spite of the miles between our lives and practice settings has had great impact. Max, thank you for your contribution to my life.

Paul Parker was director of pharmacy at the University of Kentucky, where my clinical residency was completed in conjunction with the postbaccalaureate Pharm.D. degree. Parker’s focus in the Kentucky Pharm.D. residency program was on the cultivation and development of leaders. His legacy remains today in the people who he touched and mentored. He cultivated us. He nurtured us. He pruned us. He pushed us. He mentored and encouraged me in a special way after I left Kentucky. He pruned us. He pushed us. He tutored us. He helped us. He guided a number of residents in the Kentucky program and then moved to Washington to direct the ASHP residency initiative. Later he greatly influenced pharmacy practice in California as a practice leader and dean of a newly founded college of pharmacy. But his mentoring of me over 35 years in spite of the miles between our lives and practice settings has had great impact. Max, thank you for your contribution to my life.

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Max Ray and Paul Parker underscored the essence of leadership.

A message “For One Who Holds Power”

In closing, I encourage you to read the words of John O’Donohue29 in a message titled “For One Who Holds Power.” O’Donohue was an Irish poet, author, priest, and philosopher widely sought after as a public speaker in the United States until his death in 2008. He challenged the leader—the one who holds power—to see life and circumstances beyond the realities and challenges of the present so that his work, our work, is balanced with passion, creativity, wisdom, and integrity.

I want to wish you great blessings and Godspeed. May your life as a leader in this great and honorable profession of pharmacy be one that brings respect to yourself and to those you lead. May those you lead see in you the image of a servant. And, may your character be rooted in integrity, which will leave you an enduring legacy.

References