

In Celebration of My Mistresses

June 30, 2012 NCNM Graduation Address by Dr. Michael Manes

Today, with my wife, Sheila and my alter-ego, Boudreaux in the audience, I proudly celebrate my three mistresses all of whom I met here in the Great NW.

I can finally reveal these secret affairs. As an Insurance guy Sheila may have quit me but now that I'm a doctor, she'll keep me! These three ladies are: this place, the people and the profession. For me it was love at first site – for them I think it's taken time but I hope it's love on their side as well – if not, just accept me as a stalker!

Fourteen years ago in October, Sheila and I arrived in Portland for the first time. I was a poor Cajun from South Louisiana and Sheila was a poorer Redneck from North Louisiana. A Redneck is merely a Cajun without all the sophistication. We visited the Market Street campus – it was Spartan in appearance. If there had been a sofa on the porch or a car on blocks in the front yard – we would have thought we were back at home. I'll never forget the aroma of the Chinese Medici nary that first day.

The place – Portland, hooked me with her beauty + this gal can really cook and I'm from the home of great food.

The profession to me was mysterious. Her ancestry dated back centuries, yet her presence had the innocence and enthusiasm of youth – a passion – often lost in conventional medicine.

The people were different - so different from me and also so different from each other. I learned a new term that day – it was diversity. In these 14 years she taught me and I think I helped her learn tolerance.

Portland is great and growing – the great NW her beautiful twin is inspiring. To them I say thanks.

To the people here and the profession – I've watched you grow. My first day on campus, I found free spirits with good intentions – sort of the “hippies” that I grew up with.

I also found the frustrations, desperation and despair that often accompany challenging the status quo. What disturbed me most was the sense of “victimhood” – powerless professionals. Off campus I found friendly liberated folks smoking “doobies” on the street. In 1998 the culture was “woo-woo” – today you are survivors - a professional medical school. You own your future.

In closing I won't talk about your potential even though it is great because that will focus you on your own navel and we tend to diminish ourselves when we look inside. Let's focus on the

horizon – the possibilities in a Health Care system and a population that are broken. Your possibilities are unlimited.

Our conventional system focuses nearly exclusively on illness and the body. You are committed to the body, mind and spirit. We don't need more cutting and chemicals in health care – we need more touch.

Obesity and diabetes are bankrupting and killing us. You can intervene. Don't fear the future – own it. Don't hoard what you know share it. Don't worry about being co-opted – assert yourself as a new yet wise specialty.

Don't try to explain features of what you do – sell the benefits to the patients and payers that are so desperate for a cure. Don't stand humbly at the doorway of the marketplace – join with other true believers - kick the door down and march in with confident humility.

You must be more than a doctor. You must effectively sell what you do and manage how you do it. You're a professional in business and you are a healer.

In closing – I want to thank each of you and all of you for this honor, your friendship, your patience, tolerance and time. It's been a great ride for me. I hope you enjoyed it as well – with one last kiss I offer peace and Godspeed to each of you. Thanks again! I'll miss y'all. *Healthy* Self! I love y'all.