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Sandra J. Seibert, RN *✓ 6/28*
American Heart Association
Minnesota Affiliate, Inc.
4701 West 77th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55435

Dear Sandy:

It was awfully good of you and the Minnesota Affiliate to nominate me for the high honor of a Gold Heart! It was a delightful occasion and I am truly grateful. Enclosed are my unedited comments, as I wanted to say them, but obviously had to cut back.

Regards,

Henry Blackburn, MD
Professor and Director

cc: A. Keys

/jrh

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- ✓pc: A. Keys
 - D. Labarthe
 - J. Stamler
 - R. Berman *w/last name*
 - R. Hohman
 - L. Cook *w/last name*

I'd like to confirm the obvious. Whatever you give to the Heart Association as a Volunteer, you get back much more!

Thirty-five years ago I was first tapped by the Minnesota Heart Association, if you'll forgive that nostalgic title for our fine Affiliate. In those older days it was like being rushed by the best fraternity on campus. You knew the Heart Association was the right place to be! When in Minnesota, Reuben Berman, Karl Anderson, Joe Jeurgens, John Eustermann or Ivan Frantz tapped you, it was a pleasure to do their bidding. The Heart Association gives a young cardiological "type" a home, just because you are promising, not for your accomplishments. It builds you up, just as does a strong family.

Then as time goes on and you actually do accomplish something, the local and the national tap you for other committees, a council job, or a community program. Then, of course, there is always being tapped for the annual scientific meeting, a big event for a younger investigator. I was lucky when my first AHA national meeting was combined with the World Congress of Cardiology in Washington in 1954. There I presented my first

research paper and attended a historic panel of Paul Dudley White, Ancel Keys, Noboru Nimura and Gunnar Björk, all on stage, all talking about something crazy, cardiovascular disease in whole populations. This was the formal beginning of CVD epidemiology and preventive cardiology. As Mike Weisfeld indicated, it's had a fine run, and is still running well.

I was also lucky but didn't know it, that my first national committee assignment as a volunteer was the old Criteria and Methods Committee, which quickly turned into the spanking new Council on Epidemiology, the way prepared by President Carleton Chapman and the whole pushed through by President Oley Paul. Thus, you gave to the Heart Association as a volunteer and found yourself arriving in a New World -- on board the Santa Maria!

Then Art Kerkhoff tapped me and Chuck Kolars to start a new, showcase Minnesota program on Cardiac Rehabilitation at the Sister Kenny Institute in Minneapolis. This helped launch a decade of investigations in exercise and lifestyles at Minnesota. Again, a new field and, again, getting back far more than you put in the Association!

I didn't know either that when Howard Burchell, the editor of the flagship publication of the Heart Association, Circulation, decided to retire early from the Mayo Clinic and come to the Twin Cities, that I would be tapped as his Associate Editor. A volunteer gave a lot for that, taking home an article to review every night for 3 years! But you got back major lessons, that the real responsibility of an editor and reviewer is to improve the Science and strengthen the investigator. Working under a truly Gold Star leader, Howard Burchell, you got back the insight that scientific criticism is among the highest of human faculties, and among the greatest of professional opportunities.

You gave to the National Nutrition Committee and saw whole new programs developed, and the need to improve preventive practice to reduce risk factors in high risk people. You also were exposed to the broader public health strategy and policy of the AHA -- to improve eating patterns and lifestyles of our whole society. You saw the major national importance and the wide credibility of the Heart Association, in its leadership role for good health. You got the understanding that the whole is greater than its parts!

Through American Heart Association activities, a volunteer may be tapped to deliberate on international policy with the ISFC, which collaborates with the Association to plan the World Congresses of Cardiology and the successful International Conferences on Preventive Cardiology. As a result of this volunteer exposure I was able to use my position of leadership in the Council of Epidemiology to launch the 10-Day U.S. Seminars in Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention that will hold its 17th annual session next month in Lake Tahoe. That effort, of many AHA volunteers, coordinated by Len Cook at Central, has exposed over 500 young cardiological types to the particularly broad vision of "sick and well populations," as well as "sick and well individuals". Volunteers there have gotten back much in learning, about the Socratic method of teaching, and from fellowship and contacts over the years.

Permit me the final nostalgia of recalling Meetings under the Clock at the famous old New York Biltmore, and the excitement of the National Center situated in that once-intoxicating town at the interface of science, culture and the media. That was a period of understanding, easy consultation, and close working relationships between Council leaders, the Board, the executive and staff.

I sense, on coming back a bit now, a return of this collaborative spirit. Volunteers, Councils, staff and the board seem to have a renewed feeling that none of us alone has all the answers, that together we'll develop better answers, that by sharing ideas and responsibility we will have stronger programs and probably more fun! We all need to continue to feel that this Heart Association is intimately ours, not some vague "others"; that we help run it, not that somebody else is calling all the shots; and that we individually, and as affiliates and Councils, are directly accomplishing something.

Basically, it's this fellowship, this social, cultural and intellectual fellowship, that is to me the essence of the Heart Association. It brings people together. How else would one get to work for years with such marvelous people as Sandy Seibert and Bob Hohman in Minnesota or Len Cook and Mary Winston at Central? Would our Minnesota Delegation, which nominated Bill Weidman and me for this honor, please stand. Among them is our Chairman David Ness and incoming Chairman, Morris Miller. Then there is our Executive, admired by all for her effectiveness and beloved by all for her person, Sandy Seibert!

These people, and this Minnesota Affiliate, have always worked side by side with us at the University, organizing at every step of the way, in Mankato, Fargo/Moorhead and Bloomington, strengthening and maintaining community programs in cardiovascular health promotion. Our communities and our institutions are stronger and healthier because of the Heart Association, and especially because of its heart, the people.

Thank you.

Henry Blackburn