

Jane Blankenship, President of the Speech Communication Association, 1978

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In 1934, I was born unexpectedly early in the home of my maternal grandparents. As the only child of my parents, the first grandchild of my maternal grandparents and the first niece of three doting aunts, in my home town of Huntington, West Virginia, I thrived on their attention, love, and unconditional support; their influence on the “meaning” of my life is almost inexpressible.



My family taught me to read, write, and do arithmetic before I went to first grade. Fostering an early interest in music, Mother and Dad provided piano lessons, beginning at age four. I do not remember our home without music. Nor do I remember it without newspapers, radio news, and political talk. In the earlier years, we “watched” the radio, and I remember FDR’s voice. My family cried when he died, and early on I began to realize something of “the President’s” connection with “the people.” In sum, they encouraged me to open my mind to the world beyond their front yard.

Absorbed by local and national politics in 1936, Granddad Taylor (a medical doctor) put a pencil in my two year old hand and lifted me up to mark on the ballot so, later, I could say, “I voted for FDR.” He was widely read in history and political science, served in the West Virginia State Legislature, and later became a reform mayor of Huntington, then the largest city in the “Mountaineer State.” An engaging speaker, he was invited often to address local audiences on public issues. From the time I was born, he sent me a stream of letters framed in the historical issues of the day, which Mother pasted in big hard-bound albums, so I could read them in another century, another millennium.

Echoes of the “Great Depression” and, later, World War II shaped my early life. Dad earned a B.S. in Chemistry from Marshall College as a pre-med student, but the Depression and my arrival required him to put aside thoughts of medical school. Rather, he taught in rural Kentucky schools, including, at one point, a one room school house. Hard work, saving, sharing, and concern for those less well off were part of a larger family ethic. I attended first grade in Huntington and began to enjoy “performance” activities. My first piano recital had been at age 4, and as a 1st grader I narrated the school Christmas play. These were probably extraordinarily important, because I did not know I was supposed to be afraid. I received audience applause and many hugs from my family.

During World War II, I attended grade school in two small Indiana towns while my Dad worked at a DuPont munitions plant. My grade-school teachers knew a lot, enjoyed their jobs, and were helpful. First, in the safety of bucolic Sellersburg the centers of our life were the Clover Farm store, the church, the Saturday afternoon movie, and our house, surrounded by fields of bluebells and small farms. This contrasted sharply with our second Indiana home in Charlestown, where we lived in temporary one-story duplexes, largely without yards. There, the war was omnipresent -- in everyday talk, speeches on the radio, in the fence surrounding

the Plant and the search lights plowing through the night sky. In the early grades we collected tin foil, milkweed pods (for life preservers), and knitted scarfs for the troops. I was much better at collecting than knitting.

After peace came, we moved to the “big city,” Akron, Ohio, where Dad worked at Goodyear Tire & Rubber. He had been raised on a farm and, wherever we lived, his avocation was gardening; many admired his roses and vegetables. He taught me to fish, brought me my first chemistry set, recited poetry, and taught me the values of solitude. My mother, who had attended high school in Huntington, was a meticulous home-maker, quick witted, vivacious, had a keen sense of humor, loved language, and won most “arguments.” She taught me values of sociality. Early influences included both public and private people. One of my “best friends” was my doll Eleanor (Roosevelt). In 1948, my Granddad sent me a newspaper article about Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas (D-CA), which I dutifully pinned up on my early-teen bulletin board. In college I realized how very extraordinary she was, and in 1994, I finally delivered on a promise to myself that I would someday write an article about her. Active girls in novels with identities and important things to do also contributed to my formative years. Nancy Drew did things. I also vividly recall a book series after WW II about *Nancy Dale, Army Nurse* and women in the WAVES and WACS. I discovered the myriad of worlds in East Branch Library, and when I was old enough, I went to work there. By the 6th grade I knew I wanted to be a teacher and writer.

In high school, I seemed always on the run: I played Annie Oakley in the senior class play, wrote the words to the senior class song, sang in the glee club, worked on the newspaper, and was a member of the National Honor Society. The University debate coach heard me the Sunday I was youth minister at church and asked me to join the team.

In undergraduate school, I planned to double major in chemistry and music. It did not take long for the folly of that to become apparent, so I majored in English. I debated, delivered original oratory, and was active in theater production. I belonged to a sorority and did the usual work on homecoming floats. If the Great Depression and World War II shaped much of my early life, the Ban the Bomb Movement of the 50's and the Civil Rights Movement of the 60's helped shape my college years. Later in life, one of my favorite teaching assignments was the Rhetoric of Social Movements.

My teaching career began with a Sunday school class, a day camp counselor position with the City Park System and student-teaching in grades six and eleven as part of my college program of study. I taught Grades 2-3 full-time while taking my last 6 credits at the University of Akron. Working with highly vulnerable and often abused children in a low income part of the city was a profoundly formative experience. To this day, I remember their names, their faces and the often sad stories of their lives. I graduated in 1956 with a B.A.

During my high school and undergraduate years, my family continued to “mentor” (a term not used at that time) me to prize knowledge, integrity, sustenance of family and respectful relationships. In addition to Helen Gahagan Douglas and Eleanor Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson helped fuel my interest in politics, ethics and civic behavior. High school teachers were also influential, particularly those women who taught me literature and sustained my interest in writing. *Theatre Arts Magazine* and Saturday afternoon radio broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera fostered dreams of big cities and marvelous music and developed my interest in theater. English professor Julia Hull was the single-most influential figure in my undergraduate life. The

first woman I met who finished graduate school, she was demanding, bright, took my writing seriously, and opened me to un-dreamed of depths in *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Odyssey*, etc.

Many years later, just before her retirement, my parents sent me a news clipping that she had won a distinguished teaching award. My congratulatory note said, "It's about time!" then proceeded to tell her that I was working on an article about Coleridge to whom she, seriously, introduced me. Ruth Putnam, who taught the Bible as literature and took us to Cleveland to see plays, had a softer style than Hull. From these two women I also learned that there are a number of ways to be a good teacher.

Quite accidentally, the University of Illinois (Urbana) became the site of my graduate school life. The summer after my B.A., I went to California to live life on the beach while I wrote the great American novel. Later that year, an "out-of-body experience" occurred and a total stranger told me, "It's time, kid, for you to go home now." I called my former debate coach and said that I needed order in my life. The karma must have been good, because Illinois chair Karl R. Wallace told him that a grad TA had just withdrawn his appointment. Soon, I was in Urbana. I don't know that I had ever heard of "rhetoric" as a discipline and had given no previous thought to grad school. Although I was scared most of the time, within a semester I knew I had found an academic home.

In my graduate program at Illinois there was only one woman professor (Marie Hochmuth Nichols, aged 50-55) teaching in the Rhetoric emphasis. I was the only woman in my rhetoric classes at Illinois. Throughout my entire academic life, Nichols, an extraordinary scholar-teacher and friend, was my central role model on whom I could always count when I needed counsel. Richard Murphy directed my dissertation, and Tess Murphy, his wife, provided tea, muffins, and "You can do it!" as she shoved me out of the door to my oral defense of comprehensives and dissertation defense. Karl Wallace set a good example not only for scholarship, but also for collegial behavior. Wayne Brockreide was debate director when I was a forensics assistant at Illinois, and the teaching assistants loved him for his fairness, dedication, expertise, and fabulous punning. We also saw him work with Douglas Ehninger when they developed their ground-breaking article on Stephen Toulmin. The environment was a young rhetorician's heaven.

My Ph.D. dissertation was less than a third done when I joined the faculty at Mount Holyoke College. So, in a very real sense, I was both a faculty member and a graduate student. I initiated a debate team and taught an array of courses including public speaking, argumentation, history of rhetorical theory, and rhetorical criticism to very fine students, whom the college's President persisted in calling "uncommon women." At Mt. Holyoke College, many of my friendships and acquaintances were with young, untenured women. Faculty housing was provided and our building housed about 25 of the younger women and men faculty. It had a homey quality, a communal dining room and afforded a supportive refuge. Since I was in one of the weakest departments at a strong college, I had to establish my intellectual credibility and that of my discipline. Although annoying, it toughened me. Because there were no rhetoricians to talk shop with at Mt. Holyoke College, I became active in the New England States Speech Association, the Speech Association of the Eastern States (now ECA), and the Speech Association of America (now NCA).

In 1966, I began teaching at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and continued there until I retired in 1997. One could hardly imagine a more stimulating group of colleagues than I have worked with, including Herm Stelzner, Ron Reid, Herm Cohen, Mal Sillars, Vincent Bevilacqua, and Karl Wallace. The department competed, often successfully, for the very best graduate

students. The faculty and graduate students shared an atmosphere conducive to serious scholarship; colleagues were genuinely interesting, highly energetic, and collegial. It was in such an atmosphere that I thrived, eventually receiving the Chancellor's Distinguished Faculty Medal.

In addition to teaching rhetorical theory, criticism and political communication, I also took on some administrative tasks. I was Director of Graduate Studies for six years during which the department started the Ph.D. program, and, about ten years later, I took a second tour of duty. I was Honors Director in the department several times. As Director of the University's six-credit rhetoric requirement, which also included the English as a Second Language unit and the Communication Skills Center, I answered directly to the UMASS Provost. The Rhetoric Program taught 2,000 students per semester. Seventy-two graduate teaching assistants taught in the program. Sara Stelzner and I developed a teacher training program. I also chaired the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Science Executive Committee and served on the University Academic Priorities Committee several terms.

Being the "first woman" was a mixed, if not a dubious, distinction. I was the first woman to be elected to the University's Faculty of Social & Behavioral Science Executive Committee. At the first meeting, the Dean, shuffling papers, opened the meeting by saying, "Alright gentlemen, shall we get down to business?" When he looked up – there I was. He turned noticeably red-faced and clearly was uncomfortable. His discomfort level gave me small hope that the Dean would somehow linguistically adjust to my presence. For at least another meeting or two, this opening scene persisted and his discomfort grew. Finally, he opened the FSBS meeting with "Lady and Gentlemen, shall we get down to business?" He may have been making some progress; but by singling me out as "the other," he had made all of us wish he would find a way out of the awkwardness. Let him find a way, my devilish side opined, but the "better angels of my nature" decided that I would help him out. So, I suggested, "Why don't you just say, 'Let's get started.'" Those were not the good old days. And, I have since been delighted to see increasing diversity of those around the table.

Signs of "difference" were everywhere and were at once amusing, annoying, and, mostly, tiring. During my 30 years at the University, I developed strong collegial relationships with many women faculty. Unlike the experience of some of my peers at other universities, we made substantial progress in hiring women. In the early days women were more likely to be in communication disorders and theatre. Two women were hired in rhetoric. Later, the department added mass communication and interpersonal communication; women were hired in those areas also. A conscious effort was made to open up the department. When I was Director of Graduate Studies, I worked closely with women faculty on committees and have stayed in touch with many of them including the current University Dean of Graduate Studies, who also became President of the American Speech & Hearing Association. At one point we had eight full-time women in the department. Aside from hall chats and the like, in the late 80s – early 90s faculty women worked to establish a monthly lunch on a non-teaching Friday.

Throughout my career I continued to be active in the regional and national associations. The ECA Presidency (1974) was definitive for me because it never occurred to me that I would be elected to such a high office. During my ECA Presidency, we set up a Task Force on Community Colleges and one on Secondary Schools, bringing into our decision-making and colloquy those two very important groups of people. We also established an Equal Opportunity Task Force that worked on informal rules for interviewing job candidates at convention hotels etc. When I realized how much members wanted to speak and be heard, to listen and try to understand, I also re-instituted the *Newsletter*. My Presidency was definitive for me for a second reason. When they announced my election, an elderly women in her seventies threw

her arms around me and said, "We Won!" After a moment's surprise at the hug, I realized that she meant "We (women) won." It was a moment of profound awareness.

In 1975 at the SCA Convention I returned to my hotel room to pick up my coat. The phone was ringing as I entered. To say I was surprised by the question asked by the caller would be an understatement: "Would you agree to be nominated for the SCA's Second Vice Presidency?" A prankster, I thought. But, the caller reminded me that it was the last night of the convention and the Committee wanted to announce the two nominees. It seemed clear that several people had been asked before me. One potential nominee had indicated that he would not say "yes" until he knew who would be running opposite him. They agreed to call back in two hours. I hurriedly sought to contact the persons whose opinions I valued. Literally roaming the lobby, hotel restaurants and bars, I managed to find one and to leave a call back for a second. Both agreed with me that the answer should be "No." Just how those "No's" became a "Yes" is still a puzzlement.

I ran against a man I had never met, although I think I had read his debate and argumentation book. James McBath, a very well known forensic coach, was my opponent. He was generally well-liked and especially well thought of in the West. I so fully expected McBath to win that shortly after accepting the nomination I wrote a note to Jim (to be put in a desk drawer in my office) congratulating him on winning and offering to help him in any way I could. My thinking was that I could be more "gracious" at letter writing then than after I had lost the election. When the Associate Executive Secretary Bob Hall called to inform me officially that I had won the election, no one was more surprised than I. Later, I asked Jim to work with me on the Task Force on Alternative Careers in Communication. He did so graciously and helpfully.

The months between the nomination and the election provided ample time for reflection. I recalled my first office in SAA (1967) as the "doorkeeper" for the Legislative Assembly where I handed out copies of motions and reports, being elected a delegate to the Constitutional Convention (1969), and my role as chair of what was then called the Voice, Phonetics, and Linguistics Interest Group (1968). I was rather scared I had not served on one of the "big four" boards: Educational Policy, Finance, Publications, and Research. Two days prior to being nominated for SAA's Second Vice President (1975), I was elected to chair the Public Address Division (PAD). After I agreed to run for the Second Vice Presidency, I called to resign the PAD office, not so much because I thought I would win, but because I thought it would be only fair to allow PAD to have a sure thing for its own business. I was so happy to have been given this vote of confidence from my "home group."

The decision to accept the nomination and run probably included some mixture of the following: The folly of youth. Having been so surprised that my name was on any such list at 41, I reasoned that it must be a good thing. And since I never expected such an honor, I would not feel hurt when I lost. The obligation to repay the Association. The Association had provided me with a sense of community acting as my professional family, especially when I was teaching in a small college that placed little value on communication studies as a discipline. The Association's journals and conventions provided opportunities for me to learn new things, discuss issues of disciplinary and professional concern, meet old friends, and make new ones. "Public life" appealed to me. My role models were often "public people," and I had been, in small ways, a public person much of my life. Moreover, several of my mentors had taught me a long lasting lesson: There are tasks that sorely need doing, and that is why we are here.

The reason I won is still not readily apparent to me but since "I don't know why I won" is an unacceptable answer, I will make some guesses: Moderate name recognition from writing three

text books, and publishing articles in the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Philosophy & Rhetoric, Communication Monographs, Speech Teacher, Journal of the American Forensic Association, and other journals. Having served as President of my regional association (ECA), Easterners had a chance to see me work “up close and personal” and may have tended to vote for me just as Westerners tended to vote for my opponent. Coming from a Big Ten School in the Midwest and being a rhetorician at that time was a plus. Having worked with ECA's Community College Task Force, a Secondary School Task Force, and an Equal Opportunity Task Force may have helped indicate my desire to open up the SCA. At a time when growing numbers of women belonged to the SCA, being a woman who had never been a part of the old-boy network as a plus. Being seen as a moderate who would not threaten the establishment was also an asset. I served as President at 44. Because I had not served on the Administrative Committee before my election, I had to learn about the organizational structure. I thought of myself as hard-working, pretty good at juggling several tasks simultaneously, self-motivated, and willing to listen to alternative viewpoints. But I had so much to learn. Bill Work, a kind and helpful person, was a treasure trove of institutional history and we worked hard together to balance his role as the Association's Executive Director (a hired staff position) and mine as Vice-President and President (an elected position). Barbara Lieb-Brilhart, an Associate Director dealing with both research and educational policy, a person of boundless energy and filled with good ideas, “mentored” me as we dealt with strengthening services for elementary and secondary teachers, clarifying the points of articulation between research and teaching, producing instructional materials for the classroom, and monitoring more closely pending legislation that concerned communication.

Some concern about my “credibility” seemed likely. I knew no one in the national office. My expected loss backfired. The voices of power had to be nervous about an upstart who had not even played around the edges of the old boy network, many of whom had worked with Nichols, and probably thought I was her clone. I was clearly associated with Rhetoric and Public Address, and I sensed there was restiveness about electing another rhetorician. I largely knew only people from the East and Midwest. And, I believe some folks saw my basic politeness as a weakness. Perceived strengths? I'm not really sure. I hope they were clarity of goals set and the structures, such as Task Forces, to operationalize them. It is also my hope that I was perceived as accessible, collegial, inclusive, and co-operative.

Some of the benefits I reaped from this position are incalculable. The election gave me the opportunity to work closely with Wallace Bacon (the President before me whom I had never met) and Ron Allen (the President after me whom I had known when he coached debate at Amherst College and I coached at Mt. Holyoke College, at the beginning of our careers). What treasures they are. The members of the Administrative Committees during our joint tenure initiated and renewed friendships and forged long term working relationships. Their energy, ingenuity, and willingness to work reflected their faith in the Association and our determination to do the best we could. The willingness of Association members to take on difficult and often unglamorous tasks was amazing and their diversity of views enhanced our colloquy so we see not just one side or two sides of an issue but sometimes three... twenty.... Our members were and are interested and interesting. The National Office staff was and is tireless, filled with good ideas, and patient as they have tutored each new set of officers.

For the record, the first formal public announcement of my goals itemized the following: (1) SCA should continue to improve and increase its service to the full membership by a variety of means such as providing thematically oriented regular workshops and conferences and aiding in the development and distribution of instructional material. (2) SCA should increase its efforts

to attract and serve primary and secondary school teachers, those in community and two-year colleges..., striving to become the primary professional organization for those interested in speech communication. (3) SCA should continue to define our central concepts and to explore their inter-relationships. Further, we should seek to minimize methodological quarrels, seeking alternative methods which could be brought to bear on key questions in speech communication. This we must do while striving for excellence in each of our several areas of study. (4) SCA must articulate clearly and forcefully to administrators who we are and what we are about if we are to maintain speech communication at all levels of the curriculum. (5) SCA should examine our teaching, scholarship, and community service, consistently seeking ways to demonstrate in word and deed the essentiality of our discipline and to improve the quality of our several communities. (6) SCA should lead the way in exploring alternative career opportunities. After familiarizing myself further about the workings of the Association, I formulated additional goals. For example, I worked to open up the process whereby the agenda was devised; heightened the accessibility of the leadership to colloquy with the membership; and worked to facilitate the Association's interaction with governmental agencies.

After identifying goals, other major jobs ensued: working to re-image the SCA, planning the convention, preparing the Presidential Speech, and implementing projects to actualize the goals. Of these tasks, clearly convention program planning was among the most arduous and essential. I wanted to help foster the rich diversity of the Association and help sketch out and articulate what held us together as an organization by identifying and imaging our central foci. The essential metaphor for the SCA had often been an umbrella (under which we huddle like agents from different countries who come in out of a cold rain). At the 1976 convention, an even more unlovely and illogical image was suggested – that of an octopus with tentacles reaching out in all directions. The metaphor I chose with which to imagine the Association was “constellation.” The image of constellation might better illuminate the nature of our relationships to one another. Although the initial metaphor came from a basic book about star-gazing, about six months or so later I read a set of galleys for Campbell & Jamieson's book, *Form & Genre: Shaping Rhetoric Action*. The Association, like a genre, composed of a constellation of “recognizable forms bound together by an internal dynamic....” A genre, they argue, “is given its character by a fusion of forms not by its individual elements.” For me, that was the Association. By this time in my tenure, I had a pretty good idea that my convention theme would be “Anatomy of Purpose: A Center which Holds” in order to advance the discussion of who we were: our central concepts as a discipline, our purposes as an organization. The cooperation from the program planners in carrying out the theme was tremendous.

During the planning, I converted one entire wall of my office into a worksheet, lining it with index cards of different colors representing the various divisions, commissions, etc. Barbara Sweeney, my graduate assistant, and I would sit in the middle of the room perusing the multi-colored spectacle, jumping up from time-to-time to move a card across, or up and down. The logistical nightmare of convention planning in a pre-computer age was made more manageable when Barbara suggested the metaphor of the air traffic control center at Chicago's O'Hare airport. One member, however, presented us with a unique problem. He had agreed to be on more programs than we had time slots!

The Presidential speech loomed large for at least a year, in part, because it was “previewed” months before at the regional conventions. After several reincarnations, the speech was titled, “In the Presence of the Word” (borrowed from Walter Ong). That seemed broad enough to allow me to address three recurring concerns: (1) the increasing passivity of the American public who, as Ernest Boyer put it, were “soaking up the messages of others and becoming less effective in

formulating messages of their own;" (2) the increasingly deplorable state of our public language dominated, at the time, by Doublespeak and Psychobabble, which allows us to lie directly and indirectly respectively and (3) the abdication of choice in "a decade of distraction" and "sensory overload," leading to a lack of concern for the value laden aspects of discourse. My speech may have had the singular distinction of being the only Presidential speech during which the ballroom lights went out!

Each president has several special projects, and I had three: a Task Force on Career Alternatives in Communication (CAC); apparatus for dealing more directly and more vigorously with SAA and governmental communication; and, later, suggesting attention to health communication and communication and aging. The CAC task force was important because the job market was depressed for our graduates and the country needed our skills and insights in a wide variety of settings. We needed to interface more with business and industry to know what skills and insights they required.

We undertook this initiative with surveys, the results of which were published in the ACA Bulletin. Members on the Task Force included persons from corporations (e.g., IBM, Kraft, Caterpillar), community colleges, and universities. We established the Governmental Relations Committee, which I chaired as Immediate Past President. Our original charge was to monitor communication-related legislation and set priorities aimed at helping SCA interface more productively with governmental agencies. Associate Executive Secretary Lieb-Brilhart successfully spearheaded the effort and managed to get the words "and oral communication" in one piece of legislation which, among other things, enhanced the possibility for grant-funding to members working on school curriculum advancement. With the exception of a Vice-Presidential sponsored panel on communication and aging and initial pre-planning for a summer conference about health communication and communication and aging, we merely opened the door to what has emerged as a significant part of our discussions today.

Two different kinds of troublesome events happened during this time period. First, the Association's dire financial straits resulted in the loss of one of the three executive officers in the National Office, Lieb-Brilhart. Since two of the three had been granted tenure, the choice was no choice and we lost a bright, high energy, creative far-sighted associate executive secretary. The second event occurred when the State of Illinois failed to ratify the ERA. Many members requested that our Association's convention be moved out of Chicago. A number of academic groups had already announced their intent to do so. The issue was fundamental fairness. If the state did not accede to that fairness, then they would learn that women and the supporters of equal rights had economic clout. A long and passionate debate in the Legislative Assembly ensued. Those who opposed the move did so on the basis of possible legal consequences. Moreover, they argued that it was too late to make alternative arrangements. Other arguments focused on the very real economic consequences for the low-income wage earners who were typically hired for a major convention, on the ethics of breaking a contract, and on whether the Association should be taking stands on political issues. We did not move.

Clearly, many people have helped me along the way but none more surely than my own graduate students, women and men, who have taught me much about the discipline, life, and the values of "co-mentoring." In the nearly twenty-five years that have passed since my Presidency, the Association and our discipline have grown in numbers, diversity, and sophistication. Among other signs of change, after my Presidency, the Association no longer seems "bound" by the one-every-ten years rule for nominating/electing women to its highest office. Hooray!

In response to the question, “*How would you describe your scholarship and research interests?*”, I would describe the core of my scholarly work as stemming, primarily, from rhetorical theory and criticism, in its Western incarnation, dating from Pre-Socrates to the present. There are various ports of entry into the study of rhetoric, defined by Karl R. Wallace as “the giving of good reasons.” I am particularly interested in political discourse, often in electoral politics and increasingly in women’s political discourse.

As of this writing, I see two strands: 1) Coming to terms with the nature of terms such as “language,” “form,” “style,” and “metaphor;” and 2) Identifying and examining pivotal terms and the movements they undergo in texts (both in single texts and texts of a single author, and in multiple texts by multiple authors over time). Some of these rhetors are among the lesser-known in electoral politics, while others are women rhetors. In addition to the work of Wallace and Marie Hochmuth Nichols, the work of Henry Kahane (linguistics), and Marvin Herrick (history of literary criticism) opened-up whole new perspectives which informed and broadened my theoretical and critical outlook.

I.A. Richards, Stephen Ullman, Richard Ohmann, W.K. Winsatt, Thomas Sebeok, Noam Chomsky, Charles Fries, Charles Osgood, Louis Milic, and others helped provide some long-standing insights. “The Influence of Mode, Sub-Mode, and Speaker Predilection on Style” (1974), and the book, *A Sense of Style* (1968) are good descriptions of my early work. Clearly, the rhetorical theorist having the most sustained influence on me over all these years is Kenneth Burke, who died in his New Jersey home at the age of 96 during the 1993 NCA convention (ironically or with his highest sense of piestic humor). He has provided me with a universe to think about and much joy to my scholarly life. Some of his suggestions lengthily treat or frequently underpin my work. I like to remember showing my Dad a photograph of KB and others at a panel discussion. Not knowing who Burke was, he smiled and asked, “Who is that old man? He’s the only one who looks as if he’s having any fun!”

I have stayed longer with Burke because:

---To this day I still find interesting new things to think about, and “dialoging” with him often sets off sparks to “co-haggle” about (coined by Herb Simons and Trevor Melia).

---There is a joyousness about much of his work. He loves the pun, unexpected juxtapositions, and quick turnabouts.

---He has read so widely that his dialogues with so many influential thinkers is great fun and very instructive to imagine and overhear. My personal favorite was Samuel Taylor Coleridge, until the first graduate school semester when Burke was assigned. Since my first grad-level teaching of Contemporary Rhetorical Theory, one might divine that the graduate students and I all learned together, and over the years. Both the “Pivotal Terms” article and precursor convention paper in the 1970s, co-authored with Don Abbott, “Kenneth Burke and Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Partners in Dialogue,” illustrate this. The early draft kept tugging at me long enough to reread from clean copies of Burke’s books and much of Coleridge (with Burke about where to look in his heavily annotated Coleridge). “‘Magic’ and ‘Mystery’ in the Works of Kenneth Burke” (1988) was the final product. In two other ways KB has worked for me, helping me, early on, to grasp the importance of ‘coming to terms with terms’ – one’s own and others.’ And, secondly, he led me to reread a number of other authors, including Murray Edelman and I.A. Richards.

In the remainder of this essay I very briefly review some of my scholarly and pedagogical work, hoping that this truncated view illustrates more about the nature of the work, my way of going

about it; identifying some of the people who worked with me, and glimpsing NCA office-holding while teaching and doing research.

Prior to becoming the NCA Second Vice President in 1976, my published work was divided evenly between scholarly concerns and pedagogical practice. Between 1966 and 1976 all but one of my books were textbooks. They included *Public Speaking: A Rhetorical Perspective* (1966, 1972); *Readings in Public Speaking* (1966), which was re-edited and re-titled *Selected Readings in Speech Communication* (1974); and *A Sense of Style* (1968). Various sections of these books have been reprinted, most recently in 2005. In 1976 Hermann Stelzner and I edited a volume in honor of Karl R. Wallace, Marie Hochmuth Nichols, and Richard Murphy, titled *Rhetoric and Communication: Essays in the Illinois Tradition*. For that volume I wrote "The Search for the 1972 Democratic Nomination: A Metaphorical Perspective," an essay that also proved to have wide use in classrooms.

Three articles which seem to have attracted the most notice were "Pivotal Terms in the Early Works of Kenneth Burke," co-authored with Marie Rosenwasser and Edward Murphy, a cluster analysis of major terms from Burke's first four books with emphasis on rhetorical matters (1974); the aforementioned "The Search for the 1972 Democratic Nomination," and "The Influence of Mode, Sub-Mode and Speaker Predilection on Style." These three articles foreshadowed much of my later work.

My election to the NCA Presidency followed closely after my ECA Presidency, so, much, but not all, of that writing was of the administrative type. I cannot thank enough Barbara Lieb-Brilhart, Associate Executive Secretary in the Annandale, Va. office, for showing me 'the ropes' through her incredible productivity, and love of the profession. One note of interest may be useful to future NCA presidents. During the presidential year (a much easier year than the convention year), the "Presidential Speech" did engage one central aspect of my scholarship: Speculation on the nature of language. At the 1978 convention I also presented papers on "The Special Energy of the Twinned Vision in Political Discourse," and "The 'Content' of Form," co-authored with Barbara Sweeney. The very busy time did not prevent pedagogical concerns from remaining a central interest, and I wrote and delivered at NCTE, "On Introducing the Toulmin Model of Argument," and at Temple University, "The Relevance of Kenneth Boulding's Work to Rhetorical Theory." On the surface between 1979 and 1981, much of my writing was tied to the Association, e.g., an SCA/ERIC booklet, co-authored with Sara Stelzner titled, *Speech Communication Activities in the Writing Classroom* (1979); and four articles in the *ACA Bulletin*, two of which were studies about the SCA Task Force on Career Alternatives. A clearer foreshadowing of scholarly articles emerged between 1980 and 1983, e.g., "The 'Energy' of Form" with Sweeney and "The Transformation of Actor to Scene: Ronald Reagan in the 1980 Republican Primary Debate," co-authored with Marlene Fine. The Reagan pieces generated a half-dozen papers and articles until 1992, which focused on the term "transformation," e.g., "The Transformation of Actor to Scene: Some Strategic Grounds of the Reagan Legacy" with Janette Muir (1992). In the interim, I followed-up my interest in Reagan and the rhetorical tropes and figures. For example, "Toward a Developmental Model of Form: ABC's Treatment of the Reagan Inaugural, and the Iranian Hostage Release as Oxymoron" (1985) appeared in print. Construction by metaphor also continued centrally in my research, and so "The Press and Three Chief Protagonists" Talk About the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty: Alternative Constructions of Reality" appeared in several incarnations starting as early as 1981, and is now slated for publication in 2007.

My foray into future studies was also a mix of teaching and scholarship. At some point in 1979 I taught a senior seminar, "Communication in the Year 2000" at the request of departmental honors students. At about that time the University of North Carolina was sponsoring multi-day symposia, concluding with Fred Williams and me addressing "Communication in the Year 2000." Fred, of course, knowing my early predilection for classical rhetoric, reminded me that we were to talk about 2000 "A.D!" Those who expected a juicy debate from people of widely different backgrounds received similar forecasts about the main concerns we both had. The senior seminar, debate and the erudite UNC audience inspired me to graduate from *The Futurist* magazine to a much larger repertoire of futuristic materials! I also gravitated toward Burke's interest in the "piestic" motive, and, already having a somewhat spiritual background, Janette Muir and I wrote several convention papers and short articles which led to "On Imaging the Future: The Secular Search for 'Piety'" (1987).

It would be fair to say that the 1984 Vice-Presidential campaign of Geraldine Ferraro opened up my scholarship to working more on women's discourse. The most important piece I did on Ferraro (with Cindy L. White, CCSU) was "Geraldine Ferraro and Coming to Terms with Terms." This exercise became the springboard to fulfilling the many promises I made to myself to write about my early heroine, California Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas and her distinguished service during the dark days in the 1950s. This inquiry led to several convention papers, one called "Helen Gahagan Douglas: Alternative Vision for Democracy" (1992). This grew from a 1987 convention piece with Shelly James, titled "The People Will Save Themselves: Helen Gahagan Douglas and a Jealousy For Democracy." Both pieces eventually led to two articles in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's (Ed.) book *Women Public Speakers in the United States, 1925-1993: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook* (1994).

Spurred by increased interest in teaching graduate courses in women's discourse, I began to explore the silencing of women in politics: A) By scholars ignoring them; B) By the way women candidates were identified early as weak on certain issues, e.g., crime; C) By the spectacle of male-only debates focusing on "domestic" issues in the 1992 presidential debates; D) By not fully-covering all-woman panels of experts in various Congressional hearings, e.g., Vermont Gov. Madeline Kunin, Faye Wattleton, et alia, during the Clarence Thomas fight (and also the attempt to separate woman activists from those who were elected; and E) By attempts to marginalize specific issues and particular individuals, Carol Mosely-Braun and Shirley Chisholm, for example. Several of these occurrences are analyzed in the final editing process now, for the volume scheduled for 2007.

Experiencing these historic Capitol events live on C-SPAN and devoting substantial amounts of time analyzing press attention was a great learning experience for me, and led to "A „Feminine Style" in Women's Political Discourse: An Exploratory Essay," (1995) co-authored with Deborah Robson; and a piece on the ways both national parties attempted to win women's votes in "Conventionalizing Talk By and About Women at the 1996 Presidential Nomination Conventions," (1999) co-authored with Robson and Maureen Williams.

In 1996, when I received the University of Massachusetts' Chancellor's Distinguished Faculty Medal, I noted that such honors are shared with one's family, students and colleagues. I have had the opportunity to spend a substantial part of my life pursuing research topics that deeply interest me, so, they also share with me:

The NCA Golden Anniversary Monograph Award (1975).

The ECA Distinguished Service Award (1977).

The Zeta Phi Eta Award (1982).

The Robert J. Kibler Memorial Award for Dedication to Excellence, Professional Commitment, Concern for Others, Acceptance of Diversity, Vision, and Forthrightness (1988).
The Douglas Ehninger Distinguished Rhetorical Scholar Award (1992).
The NCA Feminist and Women's Studies Division Spotlight Scholar (1994).
The ECA Distinguished Research Fellow Award (1996).
The Wallace Bacon Lifetime Teaching Excellence Award (1997).
The ECA Distinguished Teaching Fellow Award (1998).
The NCA Francine Merritt Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Lives of Women in the Field of Communication (2002).

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"The Song of the Open Road: Marie Hochmuth Nichols as Teacher," *Communication Quarterly*, (Fall 1986), pp. 419-426.

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"Keeping the Faith: On Being a Speech Communication Scholar-Teacher in the Twentieth Century," in ed., T. Benson, *Speech Communication in the Twentieth Century*, (University of Southern Illinois Press), 1985, pp. 341-366.

"The Transformation of Actor to Scene: Ronald Reagan in the 1980 Republican Primary Debates," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, (February 1983), senior author with M. Fine and L. Davis, pp. 25-36.

"The 'Energy' of Form," *Central States Speech Journal*, (Fall 1980), senior author with B. Sweeney, pp. 172-183.

"The Search for the 1972 Democratic Nomination: A Metaphorical Perspective," *Rhetoric and Communication* (1976), pp. 236-260.

"Pivotal Terms in the Early Works of Kenneth Burke," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* (1974), senior author with M. Rosenwasser and E. Murphy, pp. 1-24.

"Influence of Mode, Sub-Mode and Speaker Predilection on Style," *Speech Monographs* (1974), pp. 85-118. This monograph won a 1975 SCA Golden Anniversary Award for scholarship.

"Karl R. Wallace: The Giver of Good Reasons," *Speech Teacher* (1974), pp. 183-190.

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Additional Note

Women Leaders Project web page editor, Anita Taylor, September 2013.

The perceptive reader of Jane's essay will note the two revision dates given. Somehow, in the second revision, an error of fact appeared. On page 8 of her piece, Jane describes the tumultuous debate, in 1977, about moving the 1978 SCA convention out of Chicago. The paragraph ends with a statement, "We did not move," which is incorrect. The Legislative Assembly did endorse moving so SCA would be among the professional organizations pressuring the Illinois legislature to reconsider its refusal to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. The SCA staff, especially Executive Secretary Bill Work and First Vice President Ron Allen who planned the program, made it work: The 1978 convention was in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in November. Readers interested in learning more about this event may consult my essay in these pages or in the article by Catherine Palczewski in the upcoming NCA Centennial Volume.