

# Farewell Speech

**Charles Cutler MD**

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Pennsylvania Medical Society

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Mr. Speaker, members of the House of Delegates, friends, and invited guests.

This is my final time to speak to you as Medical Society president. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity and honor to serve this organization for the past year.

Thank you!

Thank you for your friendship.

Thank you for your encouragement.

Thank you for your trust.

And thank you for allowing me to represent the finest Pennsylvania physicians for the past 12 months.

It is traditional during this speech for the outgoing PAMED president to report the accomplishments of his or her year as president. There have been many, and they have been shared with you through email, snail mail, print publications, social media, and press releases throughout the year. If you need more, pull aside any staff member here and give him or her a chance to share their work for the medical society. I assure you that you will be impressed.

In a few moments, Martin Raniowski, our executive vice president, will highlight some specifics that you need to know. And shortly you will hear Ted Christopher, our incoming president, speak on the successes he expects to see in the coming year.

So I will depart slightly from tradition. And I will only address two items. One is to recognize those who have allowed me to stand on their shoulders. Those individuals who have worked hard behind the curtain, as the metaphor goes, so that I the person in front could stand out. Without them, there would have been no successes this past year.

The second thing I want to do is talk personally about all of you. A bit odd perhaps. But I plan to do it anyway.

As I prepared my remarks for today, I hesitated to recognize individuals by name. It is inevitable that names are left out. But, I am going to do it anyway. And some day in the near future, I will almost certainly be apologizing profusely to those whom I forgot.

You have a highly motivated and talented board of trustees. And leading the board is an executive committee that is second to none. I wish you all could see, as I have, the countless hours these doctors have given up from their family-time and their professional practices to serve all of you.

Senior staff at the medical society does more for all of you than any other professional organization I've known. Martin Raniowski, Heather Wilson, Tami Brehm, Angela Boateng, and Richard Gibbons. What inspirational leadership you have shown!

The professional staff that supports the officers, the BOT, and the physician leaders is highly talented. My thanks to Ellen Yasinski and Susan Ray.

And, finally, across every department and all offices are dozens of staff members dedicated to serving the members. Let me ask all of the PAMED Society staff to rise and accept a round of applause for the work you've done on our behalf.

Several months ago, Sharon Miller left the medical society after 2 decades of 24/7 commitment to the medical profession. She moved on to bigger and better things inside the Washington DC beltway serving a national medical organization. I miss her and if she's in the room, I'd like her to stand and be recognized by all of you with a round of applause.

It seems to me that most departing speeches like mine, at some point share a quote from William Osler. Tiresome for sure. Well, I won't break tradition.

Osler taught that medicine is the most humane of the professions and the most intellectually progressive. And he was right.

He points out that medical progress can be slow and it can be erratic at times. But it is the only profession with the potential to free humanity from physical suffering. And look what has happened in the slightly more than 100 years since he died. Through vaccination, sanitation, anesthesia, new science in bacteriology, virology immunology, biotechnology, gene therapy and informatics, we have created a revolution. A revolution that brings us nearer than ever imagined to the day when there is no unnecessary death, no suffering, no sorrow, and no pain.

It is the exceptionalism of the medical profession that has brought us here. As I look out at all of you and as I have traveled to county medical society events this year, and as I have met society members, it is with consistency that I've found that exceptionalism in the day-to-day work that all of you do.

Never has the outlook been brighter. Everywhere doctors are better trained, better equipped. Everywhere disease is better understood.

Diseases known to our parents and grandparents have disappeared. Public health improvements have lessened suffering and brightened the lives of millions.

I was reminded recently by three friends (Christine Laine, Darren Taichman, and Darilyn Moyer) the important role you played in this. What I've seen and what I've learned about physicians like all of you is:

You make people feel better.

You make them live longer.

You help improve their quality of lives.

You help people make decisions that give them and their loved ones peace of mind

You help people see that they can have control in the face of diseases that cannot be controlled.

And so as we come together this weekend with proud diversity:

Diversity spanning the gamut from solo practices to large groups.

Some from private practice and some from the rolls of the employed.

Diversity from small towns, from rural communities, from the suburbs and from the cities.

The young, the middle aged, and those much older.

A balance of genders.

And diversity of all ethnicities.

Some with big dreams; and some with small ones.

Some looking for hurried change; and some looking for slower evolution.

Some interested in public health, and some interested in legislation. Some interested in education, and some interested in practice viability.

May the next 24 hours, through the reference committee testimony, the debate at the HOD, and your many side bar conversations allow us to work through our differences and come together to set formidable policy for the healthcare of Pennsylvania's citizens.

As a profession, we welcome accountability for everything we do. Keep that in mind during your discussions. Our deliberations and our decisions must always include our patients' participation in their care.

I need not remind you that medicine is an art as well as a science. Despite all of the technology and science we bring to the bedside, it is so often our humanity, our caring, and our concern that is the ultimate measure of success.

Those who suffer need you to be something more than a doctor. They need you to be a healer. Sometimes that requires taking off your white coat. And this weekend that's what is happening. No one is wearing a white coat today. We've taken them off. But we are here this weekend, to heal the profession. To improve all that is missing, all that is lacking, and all that is needed.

May this meeting fulfill all of your needs as healers and all the needs of our patients. And may the patients we serve live happy and healthier lives because of the work you will do today, tomorrow, and throughout the next 12 months. The best is yet to come!

Again, my deepest thanks to all of you. Good health and Godspeed.