

The Measure of a Person is the Worth of the Things He or She Cares About

Message from the NOSSCR President, Pamela I. Atkins, ESQ.

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The Practice of law is at its core an altruistic calling. Social security representation provides lawyers and representatives with an opportunity to demonstrate real compassion for their disabled clients, who, in many cases, without the earnestness of their counsel, would be without voice and without hope.

In using our words to advocate on behalf of our clients we are giving hope. One need not be a learned scholar to understand the importance of hope. For many disabled citizens, hopelessness is an unfortunate collateral disorder of their primary incapacity. As social security representatives, we not only provide representation, but often, we provide hope. And as physicians, authors, leaders and most importantly, those being led will attest, hope can make all the difference in recovery, revitalization or simply achieving a return to a dignified life or repose.

Bearing in mind that the measure of a person is the worth of the things he or she cares about, I would say that by virtue of the actual hundreds of thousands of hours logged in this room, spent championing the causes of your incapacitated clients, it is obvious what YOU care about and thus, your measure in this world. Within our association, there are many examples of this famous creed by Marcus Aurelius. At our Fall conference last year, our members heard me talk about just such committed individuals in the awarding of the Distinguished Service Award, the listing of NOSSCR's Board of Directors, its Past Presidents, Nancy Shor and the NOSSCR staff.

Everyone has his or her own style of action. Most everyone feels passion for those less fortunate. However, not everyone has a passion for helping. Those of us that do have this passion have simply made a personal, positive choice regarding it.

In our organization there are numerous tributes to professional acts of kindness and in many case lives lived in the service of others, in particular the disabled or injured. We can all feel honor on behalf of these individuals

and their significant accomplishments, but more importantly it is my hope that these individuals have and will continue to inspire you our members to the great feelings --not of being recognized for outstanding achievements, but the much more important, if less public feeling of self worth derived at the moment of service to another.

As President of NOSSCR I have a charge, a challenge, a request to all of you --our members - to make a commitment for future service and an increased, positive impact on our disabled communities by our group through increased individual participation in other organizations. We are asking each of you to make a commitment to become involved at a significant level in at least one organization serving the disabled---to be a bridge from NOSSCR to the community...the larger community serving the disabled. If you are already in a position of service...wonderful! We want to know about it.

At our 2003 Fall NOSSCR meeting, during the Thursday morning session on November 6, Nancy Shor and the almost 800 NOSSCR members attending wished me a Happy 29th Birthday. While there is very little that can top being wished a Happy 29th Birthday at age 37, the gift I truly hope for is that all of our members will commit to helping one other organization...that each of you will stretch yourself a little more beyond your commitments to family, work and friends and all the practicalities that go hand in hand with those commitments. In the end, not only is your commitment a gift to me, to NOSSCR, and to the community at large, but gift to yourself.

Pamela I. Atkins, Esq.