

Pharmacy's Dizygotic Twins

by Donald E. Letendre, BSpH, PharmD



Witnessing the unique bond between twins is truly fascinating. And when that observation is applied to

Pharmacy there is no better example, in my opinion, than the special bond that exists between Iowa and Wisconsin. Born initially out of a very special friendship between CEOs Tom Temple and Chris Decker, PSW and IPA became the first unified state pharmacy associations in the nation, an astonishing accomplishment. As Dean at Iowa and as an honorary UW residency graduate, I have had the unique privilege of witnessing first-hand for many years the extraordinary efforts of both organizations, their forward-thinking governing boards, and their equally amazing legacy of leadership. On countless occasions, I have gushed with pride as I trumpeted the many wonderful examples of the highest professional ideals exhibited by pharmacists from both states. Just think for a moment the profound impact their actions have had on countless students, residents, and other young practitioners launching their careers who have laid witness to such exemplary professionalism. 'Leading-by-example', 'walking-the-talk', and 'work-hard-play-hard' are most deserving phrases to include in the Iowa/Wisconsin pharmacy lexicon!

Careful examination of the fundamental objectives of both organizations is instructive: collaboration; advocacy through a unified voice; innovation; education; active engagement; promoting leadership development; and, pursuing positive patient outcomes that make a difference in patients' lives are among those that stand out. And while these words are simple to scribe, what separates these two organizations from most of their counterparts is the purposeful,

vigorous, dedicated, and resolute manner in which they approach these lofty goals. Doing so requires sustained, thoughtful leadership, an unwavering commitment, and a determined membership. Is it any wonder then that Kate Gainer, IPA's CEO since 2012 is a Wisconsinite by birth and education, and PSW's Chris Decker, conversely, is an Iowan by birth and education...how ironic, yet, how fitting!

Dizygotic twins...separate, but in so many ways they have clearly emerged from the same organizational DNA. As a consequence, there is a notable level of mutual trust, caring, and outward expressions of respect that are both palpable and visibly noticeable even to the most casual of observers. Throughout the years, these shared virtues have been on full display through joint efforts like "Leadership Pharmacy", a unique leadership development program dedicated to new practitioners (no more than 15 years of active practice since graduation), and the annual PSW/IPA Leadership Dinner that brings together presidential officers, academic leaders, key thought leaders from both states, and their respective association executives and protégées. These annual events provide meaningful opportunities to share programs, perspectives, policies, best practices, and strategies as well as foster a depth of fellowship that is simply uncommon in today's fast-paced, ever-changing healthcare environment. Moreover, these efforts have helped facilitate the growth and development of national leaders. One need only to look at the roster of presidential and board-elected officers to many of the nation's pharmacy organizations over the past few decades to fully appreciate the dramatic impact both organizations have had. Consequently, it is with little wonder that the cultures

exhibited by both organizations mirror each other so closely.

PSW was formed in 1998 and IPA followed suit a few months later in January 1999. As both organizations celebrate 20 years of exemplary leadership, it seems only fitting that we take pause to celebrate their achievements as two of the nation's most premiere, productive, prolific, and purposeful state pharmacy organizations. Not unlike decades past, pharmacy continues to face many daunting challenges. Yet, there is no doubt in my mind that the leadership of both organizations will be at the fore tackling these challenges head-on just as they have done since the birth of their existence.

Frankly, I am in awe observing the highly professional manner in which PSW and IPA consistently and deliberately go about their business. PSW and IPA...I salute you!

Born out of a shared vision...united by a shared cause...truly, truly amazing!

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