



WILD GARDENER

REMARKS BY

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Recipient of the 2010 Remington Honor Medal
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Thank you, **Bob (Gibson)**, for your most generous remarks. Throughout my professional life, you and your “twin” UCSF brother, **Bob Day**, have been my consummate and steadfast champions. What a pair! My deep thanks go as well to my treasured and long-time colleagues and friends—**Lyle Bootman**, **Dennis Helling**, and **Milhap Nahata**—for supporting my nomination.

In this moment, I stand here and look out at this amazing and abundant field of colleagues and friends. I am completely energized. I have been nourished throughout my entire professional career by you—by your vitality, your good will, and your camaraderie. Thank you for sharing these gifts with me, and thank you for being with me on this special night.

I accept the Remington Honor Medal from the American Pharmacists Association with profound gratitude, and with the knowledge that this honor has as much to do with my experiences in the garden of life as it does with *any* professional achievements in pharmacy that have been attributed to me.

This evening I am going to talk to you about two passions of mine: pharmacy and gardening. Each has informed the other, and I will explain how.



Gardening evolved from an interest to a passion when my husband Don and I acquired a weekend home a decade ago in Sonoma County north of San Francisco. My garden there has been restorative. It is a quiet place where summer butterflies come for nectar and migrating birds can find seeds, shade, and water to sustain them on their journeys. This is a garden where I can sort out my thoughts, relax, and even come up with solutions to vexing problems.

I had always wanted a cutting garden for vibrant year-round bouquets, but San Francisco’s sandy soil and its perennial fog and wind support

only green shrubs...with an occasional nod to white camellias and climbing hydrangeas.

I was stunned by the magical effects of Sonoma's rich loamy soil, sun, and gentle breezes. Each spring weekend, I would find my Sonoma landscape transformed by plants that had reached another 6 to 12 inches toward the sky!

The property's low-flowing water well caused us to turn to drought-resistant California and Mediterranean natives. I searched for plants with interesting foliage, flowers, fruits, and berries.

I did not approach this pastime scientifically or methodically. Instead, I played—pushing into the ground every interesting species I could find.

I followed general recommendations for sun or shade, and then watched. I learned to give and take—one for the gophers, one for the deer, and one for me. In this way, I discovered the species that thrived in this environment, their habits, and their contributions to the landscape, the bouquets, and the harvest. Each weekend, I returned to foggy San Francisco with baskets overflowing with fresh produce and sweet-smelling flowers for my city friends. I take so much joy in sharing the bounty of my garden.

Don and I have done our best to encourage and work with this garden—amending the soil, weeding, pruning, and editing—and this garden, in turn, has responded and shaped the gardener in me. It has taught me patience, taught me to appreciate what lies *below* the surface, and given me respect for the ways of nature. When I am deep in the dirt where I can inhale the smell of the earth and am surrounded by seedlings, I am happy. But the best part is this: When I am in the garden I am not the dean; I am just Mary Anne.

I have found that the way I work in my Sonoma garden mirrors how I work in my professional garden. My mother says that I have returned to my farming roots in all aspects of my life.

Over my lifetime, there have been many gardeners who have served as exemplars, challenged me, and shaped me. Tonight, I share the stories of my professional garden and a few of my gardeners. I ask that you join me by reflecting on the metaphoric gardens and the gardeners in your lives.



My mother, **Jean Yayeko Koda**, is my master gardener, for she brought me to life. This is her—4 feet, 10 inches tall and 90 years young. She is “ghenki” as they say in Japanese—energetic (doing tai chi one and one-half hours a day), intellectually engaged, and opinionated!

I point out Mother’s size because I did not come into the world easily. I was a 9-pound breech baby born in 1946. I came after she and my father had been released from a Japanese-American internment camp. They had returned after World War II to the family farm in California’s Central San Joaquin Valley, where they found that my grandfather’s best property and rice farm had been sold by the person entrusted with power of attorney.

It was left to my father, the oldest son, to rebuild the rice mill and the farming business. He did so in full partnership with my mother—he with two years of college education, and she with secretarial training.

As the only Japanese-American family in a small rural town, my parent’s approach was to assimilate, to excel in their work, and to become active citizens of the community. They volunteered in the schools, at the fire department, and for many charitable organizations. Their friends spanned all socioeconomic and racial groups. My playmates were the children of farm workers and itinerant laborers, who arrived in the late summer and fall for rice and cotton harvest and moved on in the spring to pick and pack prunes in what is now the Silicon Valley.

When my father died at the young age of 43, my mother continued on solo. By her actions, Mother taught me not to be embittered by adversity; to build family and community; to be passionate about work; and to be blind to race, socioeconomic status, and gender. She was spunky then and still is!

It never crossed my mind that I was limited because I was a girl—or that work, marriage, and childrearing were at all incompatible. With hard work, I could do anything.

Thank you, Mother, for defining the way I work and live in this world.



From the time I was a pharmacy student, mentors played pivotal roles in what I would do and who I would become professionally. I

had no aspirations beyond that of being the very best and most rigorous clinical pharmacist I could be. I had wonderful mentors, many of whom are in this room, but I will tell you about three. Jere Goyan, Hal Wolf, and John Biles helped me *see* the possibilities beyond the little plot I had staked out for myself.

In the background of my early career was the women's movement, but I paid little attention because I was gender blind and, frankly, naïve. Looking back objectively, however, there were no women at the time in leadership or tenured positions at UCSF or at many other institutions—nor had there been many women in leadership positions nationally in academia.

I was the first woman on the UCSF School of Pharmacy faculty to have a baby. There were no family leave policies back then, so I worked until the day I delivered. But by my own choice, I returned to work two weeks after my son was born, because I had heard it whispered in the halls that motherhood would mark the end of my career. I was determined to do it all! Fortunately, we now have family-friendly policies. Both mothers *and* fathers are given time away from work to fully bond with their babies without jeopardizing their careers.

It was **Jere Goyan**, my dean, who planted me into different soils and in different places. Even during my pharmacy student years at UCSF, Jere appointed me to national committees as a student representative. I cannot tell you how many times in my career Jere put me in gardens with prominent, larger-than-life thinkers. I always shuddered and asked myself: “Why on earth am I here?” I was stressed and stretched over and over again. Jere was like the gardener who raises dry-farmed tomatoes. This gardener stresses the plants so that the energy ends up in the fruit. And while the fruit is small, its impact is large; the dry-farmed tomato is intensely sweet and flavorful.

Hal Wolf, former dean at the University of Utah, is another one of my life gardeners. When Hal chaired the Commission to Implement Change in Pharmacy Education, he used infinite patience and gopher-trap logic to bring together wildly disparate points of view. Hal taught me to think strategically and to use humor to lighten tough discussions. And, by his own example, he taught me to hold tight to and speak up for fundamental principles that would move the academy and the profession forward—all for the good of patients.

Throughout the years, I have turned to Hal for advice and wisdom, and he has always *failed* me miserably in this regard. Instead, he asks insightful and challenging questions, which lead me to my own conclusions. They were there all along. What dear friends he and his wife Joan have been to me.

And then there is **John Biles**, dean emeritus at the University of Southern California. He somehow saw that if given the right nutrients, I might flourish professionally in many different settings. He would make a point of having lunch with me at every annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. During one of those lunches, John urged me to run for president of the organization. I was taken aback and demurred, but he insisted and put me on the slate of nominees.

All the while, John has followed my deanship with great fervor, emphasizing the importance of uncompromising excellence and of seizing opportunities. His many notes of encouragement have been like rose blooms. He, too, taught me not to take my frustrations too seriously. When I was appointed dean, John sent me a big bowl full of marbles. The note read, "When you've lost all your marbles Mary Anne, it's time to quit!" I am happy to report that the bowl remains full... I hope you will agree.

Take note. All of my guides were males, visionaries, and deans of prominent pharmacy schools. They saw in me potential that I could never have imagined. Today, we have many female leaders and deans whose responsibility it is to join our male colleagues and, together, look for potential and propagate the most promising seedlings.



Toby Herfindal, Joe Hirschmann, and Rich de Leon were my first professional role models and teachers. They were my "think-big" landscape architects. Like a random kernel dropped into a garden by a passing bird, it was pure happenstance and good fortune that I landed as a student at UCSF just as the seeds of clinical pharmacy were germinating. Fierce idealism, experimentation, and rebellion against the status quo were common traits among my new colleagues. They created a satellite pharmacy at the UCSF Medical Center, which was, perhaps, the world's first pharmacy located in the hub of a patient care floor.

There on the 9th floor pharmacy, the concept of clinical pharmacy practice—a pharmacist at the patient’s side—took root.¹ The pharmacists who led this change—among them, Toby, Joe, and Rich—were on a mission to apply their expertise to the best use of medicines. They were brash, rigorous, and demanding—giant trees all. I felt their shade, but was determined to meet their standards, join their ranks, and make lives better.



My pharmacy school classmate, **Lloyd Young**, and I were hired at about the same time to work in the central unit dose area in the basement of UCSF’s medical center. Lloyd is my founding partner in the gardening business. Together, we moved up to work the graveyard shift in the 9th floor pharmacy. Whoa! We had achieved our dream! At the same time, we learned how heavy the weight of responsibility could be when you are the only pharmacist in the house and responsible for all aspects of the practice. It was pretty scary!

After almost every shift, Lloyd and I headed for the library. We searched the literature for information that would support our therapeutic recommendations, and we prepared course materials for small group conferences, which we led in the early afternoons. We based our course materials on patient cases we saw on the floor. Our goal was to expose pharmacy students to the clinical questions and drug problems we commonly encountered. Ted Tong, another classmate, and Brian Katcher were also involved. This coursework led to the text, *Applied Therapeutics*. For almost 40 years, Lloyd and I—supported by our partners, Linda and Don—worked until sunrise and on weekends digging through chapter submissions and pruning text. We have shared in this work equally and with equal passion. Thank you, Lloyd, for your partnership as we worked to clear the brambles and plant new seeds.



I have grown with abandon at the **University of California, San Francisco**. What a rich and fertile soil it has been for me—teeming with diverse life forms and nutrients. Because I began at UCSF as a student, and because so many people set deep tap roots there, I have gathered many friends and colleagues—from janitors to staff members, from clinicians and teachers to Nobel Prize-winning scientists, from students to patients. They are all part of my garden.

The **students**, past and present, at UCSF and around the world, are my wild flowers. Every year a new crop appears, and like wild flowers they exhibit untamed variation that is vigorous and unexpected. In truth, their sky-high aspirations and amazing accomplishments have kept me fresh and alive. They inspire me and lead me. They are my reason for being in academia. I love them!

Like soil, our work environment is a living thing that we must continually tend. And like soil, those things hidden beneath the surface can be most important. There, microorganisms break down detritus and concentrate minerals; earthworms loosen the clay; and roots grow deep to gather water and nutrients. These elements intertwine to form complex networks that support the grand gardens prized by the passers by. I cannot begin to name all who have nurtured me at UCSF as I have grown. But as I think about this place where so many have flourished, I conclude that it is the whole that creates the possibilities; it is the whole that controls the pests; and it is the whole that sustains and sets free the intellect of its community.



And of course as we grow our professional lives, we bring with us lessons learned from our personal lives. I began my story with my mother. My younger and only sister, **Carole Lynn Koda**, was a youthful 59 years of age when her physical self left us. According to the new science of siblings as reported in the venerable scientific journal, *TIME* Magazine, our brothers and sisters have great sway over who we become in life:

They are our collaborators and co-conspirators, our role models and cautionary tales...our scolds, protectors, goads, tormentors, playmates, counselors, sources of envy, [and] objects of pride...Our siblings may be the only people we'll ever know who truly qualify as partners for life.²

Carole was and remains my constant gardener. She was a Renaissance woman who was intellectually and emotionally deep and strong, great-hearted and grateful, funny, and engaged in matters of human importance. She was an autodidact exploring many intellectual landscapes. She brought poetry, politics, and nature into my life. As we trekked together the rocky trails to her death, I became a better healer. I relearned the lesson that taking a genuine interest in patients as people, rather than as diagnostic labels with data, brings humanity and healing to the care we provide.³

Don Kimble is my husband, father of our four children, and loving partner for more than 40 years, so he has been at my side throughout this whole professional expedition. I see him as the beautiful big granite boulder in my garden. He is a touchstone who keeps me in perspective when my branches get all twisted and tangled. He holds the soil when the professional and family storms blow through. And he is solidly in place, supporting all of my work and creating the quiet contemplative space I need to restore myself.



So as you can see, the work and play of gardening have paralleled my work and play in our great profession. And lucky for me, my life gardeners have been great and generous teachers. There have been so many lessons, but here are just four more:

- First, gardens, like lives, require constant tending with both our hearts and minds. If left unattended, they quickly give way to the weeds and become fallow.
- Second, gardens are influenced by environmental conditions outside of our control. Even when given the best of care, the harvest can be disappointingly meager. Patience, flexibility, and longer views are needed.
- Third, gardens lead us through experiences. You do not get to choose the pace. Sometimes you turn a corner and see a new perspective or lift a branch to reveal an unexpected treasure. The beauty of gardens lies in their unplanned offerings and challenges.
- And last, I have learned that there are many kinds of gardens, all of which reflect our own diversity in the ways we work. European gardens are symmetrical, understandable, and reassuring. Asian gardens are careful distillations of nature, creating meditative spaces and a respite from chaos.

And then there is the wild garden, which has always appealed very much to me. The wild gardener does not try to control every inch of space. She must be open to what might happen and what the garden might reveal: It refines, she refines; it teaches, she learns. Accidental combinations of plants can elevate the beauty of each. By gathering plants from throughout the garden to

create a bouquet, the wild gardener sees up close the detail that escapes the view from afar. Gardening invites the beginner's mind; it is a path to discovery.

These lessons are encapsulated beautifully by Wendy Johnson, who gardened for more than 30 years at the Green Gulch Farm Zen Center near San Francisco. In her most recent book, Wendy writes:

Gardening at the dragon's gate is fundamental work that permeates your entire life. It demands your energy and heart, and it gives you back great treasures as well, like a fortified sense of humor, an appreciation for paradox, and a huge harvest of Dinosaur Kale and tiny red potatoes.⁴



My benediction...

May each of you dig deep into the soils of your gardens.

May each of you sow seeds that can be harvested by generations to come.

And may each of you revel in the glory of your garden's wildness.



Domo arrigato.

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