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How I Found My Groove

By Howard Bellman



My mother was gifted. Insightful. Within moments of meeting someone, she was capable of giving the compliment they desired or deflating them with surgical precision. If she knew a bit of your history, she could sum you up in a few words and pretty much characterize you for life. On top of that, she had a famous sense of humor. She could make you laugh from the soles of your feet on up and enjoyed a good belly laugh herself, which meant that whether she was skewering you or making your day, the presentation had a diplomatic quality. She just seemed to see and hear more acutely than most, and have a capacity to get to the core quickly. I like to think that those were two of her gifts to me.

Until I started high school in 1951, we lived in the working-class neighborhoods of Toledo, Ohio. In those days, I was not formidable in appearance and was the only Jewish

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kid within bullying distance. There was a lot of verbal crap flung in my direction, not to mention a lot of punching and wrestling on the way to school and back. Otherwise, from the first through the eighth grade I kept my distance, and the others did the same. When I came home with my wire-rimmed spectacles all bent out of shape, my mother counseled that the other kids were jealous. My father explained how he punished his assailants.

My father worked very hard and constantly, and by my high school years had taken us out of those neighborhoods and into a lovely home of our own in a neighborhood with plenty of Jewish families. The Jewish kids there had generally grown up together, however, and my place in the society of my peers was possibly even more tormented and undesirable than it had been before. However, toward the end of high school, for reasons I do not recall, I learned to play the drums and even led a dance band that performed at the YMCA and a few high school events. (It was OK to be playing at the dances in the gym. I wasn't compromising any dating opportunities.)

Everything changed in college. I was in Cincinnati, without a reputation and a would-be musician. In short order I met two extremely sophisticated sophomores who encouraged me, and within weeks, I was playing, mainly the jazz of that era, all around the city. My Toledo persona was history. I continued to play the drums a lot throughout my undergraduate years, and despite my less than admirable academic performance, I grew an ego.

Eventually, I was able to assess my musical career potential and enrolled in law school for another round of academic mediocrity on my part. In law school, I weaned myself off the drums, self-assessed once again, and headed for the labor law program at another law school. (The weaning included some coffeehouse folk music performances featuring the political songs of Pete Seeger and the

like. Union organizing and the plight of workers were at the leading edge of liberal politics at the time.) Labor law was an easy segue and, thank heaven, where I landed. I found what I cared about *and* what I might be good at. Unprecedented.

After graduation, I moved to Detroit as a bottom-rung attorney at the regional office of the National Labor Relations Board, as content as a “pig in shit.” It was the era of Jimmy Hoffa and Walter Reuther and the Big Three auto-makers all at their most powerful, and I was reinforced by an office replete with supportive managers and colleagues who were glad to see me realize my potential. (It was a sort of encouragement I had not received, or earned, in college or law school.) I moved quickly up the ladder and found that I was not inclined to become a litigator (the indicator of success in that office) or a member of a law firm (the other success indicator). While I was very glad to remain immersed in labor relations, I was not disposed to sign on with a union or a management law firm. As I saw it, there were too many villains on both sides. I like to think I was inclined to a definition of “success” that emphasized personal integrity over wealth and power, that being a “hired gun” for unions or management was contrary to my nature, and that I was a “natural” neutral. But maybe I was attracted to acceptance by a broad range of individuals and segments of society, and where is broad acceptability more a component of success than among mediators and arbitrators?

I took a position at the bottom at the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC). That job included work as an administrative law judge, an arbitrator, and a mediator. I would be neutral as can be, in a very small agency in a state in the midst of leading the nation into what I saw as enlightened labor policy for public employees. There I learned to mediate from very skilled

senior colleagues and received enormous support from the three commissioners who were appointed to lead the agency. (Still a well-placed pig.) After nine years of that, in late 1974, I was appointed by the governor to the commission that heads the WERC and served in that capacity for two more years.

The WERC is my alma mater. It is where I acquired my skills and values. To this day, as I work in a multitude of other settings and sectors, what I absorbed there grounds my practices. We were mediating between unions and employers, assisting them as needed to achieve collective bargaining agreements governing future wages, hours, and working conditions. The process was transactional and allowed the parties to maintain their fundamental, albeit conflicted, belief systems. It relied heavily on the knowledge and interests of the two parties, and it was legitimized by statutes and venerable American public policies. Our objective was “labor peace,” not optimal public or private enterprises, workplace democracy, or fair compensation. It was closure—strike avoidance. We worked day and night, near and far, in whatever weather miseries Wisconsin provided. We were proud of our service but asked for no recognition.

We understood that ideally the parties negotiated successfully without our help, and that the less we were needed the better, both in general and during the course of a particular mediation. It would be perverse to insinuate any dependence on mediation into the parties’ practices. The grief and the glory were theirs. Ownership of the dispute and its settlement terms belonged to the parties, but we were there when they called. We found conflicts within the caucuses, breakdowns in communication, problematic assessments of alternatives to settlement, limited repertoires of possible settlement terms, the need for a referee,

and a myriad of other barriers to agreement that mediators are well positioned to address.

We also practiced in a broad variety of settings. Even though I was limited to labor-management negotiations for collective bargaining agreements to determine wages, hours, and working conditions, I worked with symphonies and ballet companies, foundries and factories, teachers and firefighters, university faculties and grave diggers. The construction industry and the printing industry were communities with cultures of their own. Despite the obvious superficial commonalities, the enterprises and the workforces required adaptations. In hindsight, it was a preliminary for adaptations to come.

There was no obvious intellectual activity at the WERC. There were no books to read, no academics to examine or explain us. We understood that, according to the traditions of our work, if we were ethical, we would do well. If we were truly and slavishly “neutral,” we would enjoy an excellent reputation and continued success, as we defined it. As I did that work, especially in state and local government labor negotiations and as an appointed agency head, I think some sensibilities about governing and real politics seeped into my worldview and laid some groundwork for my later work in public-policy mediation.

When I resigned from the WERC to help found the Wisconsin Center for Public Policy (WCPP), a private non-profit research institute, I saw an opportunity to initiate a practice as a labor-relations neutral and to advocate for some experimentation and innovation in labor relations conflict management. WCPP, which was generously supported by Herb Kohl, a businessman who would later serve in the US Senate, was billed as a think tank. Some of us did some respectable research, but it was also something of a staging area for Democrats waiting to run for office. Elec-

tion campaigning and related operations were the coin of the realm.

The research at WCPP moved me toward a more intellectual approach to my work, and I began teaching labor law at the University of Wisconsin in 1978. (In later years I taught dispute resolution courses there. In 1995 I began teaching dispute resolution theory at Marquette University in Milwaukee at its Center for Dispute Resolution Education and its law school.)

Around this time, friends who were still leading state agencies asked if I might mediate disputes in the caseloads of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Public Service Commission. Tony Earl, the DNR secretary, had observed my mediation of a collective bargaining agreement with a union of state employees while he was heading another department. He wanted a consensus-based resolution of a very complicated waste-load allocation dispute. No such thought had ever crossed my mind. I had no idea what the term “waste-load allocation” meant. (It turns out that in this context, “waste-load allocation” means the load of pollutants each discharger of waste agrees to release into a particular waterway.)

This was the late 1970s, and the field, later described as alternative dispute resolution, was in its earliest stages. Neighborhood justice centers were opening. (I served on the board of one.) Frank Sander, the Harvard Law professor known as one of the founders of ADR, visited me. He was considering mediation as an adjunct of the courts. Family counseling and divorce professionals were seeing mediation as superior to litigation. (I am embarrassed to recall that in 1981 I spoke at a conference of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts and said of their concept and use of the term mediation, “You can’t paint it green and call it grass.” Clearly, I was a naïve purist and did not anticipate the expansive connotation of “mediation.”)

Probably because I had accumulated a caseload of environmental disputes due to my friends in government, the Ford Foundation provided generous support for that work and invited me to gatherings of others in that emerging practice area. I don't know which was the greater gift, and to this day I treasure the friendships and professional support of the colleagues I met then.

My new colleagues generally were not former labor mediators, and some were not lawyers. Some were planners, and some came from other disciplines. Worse yet, they were comfortable with non-agreement-seeking public engagement processes. They did not share my assumptions, and their ideas of best practices seemed heterodox and dubious. While I believed that disputes were best resolved by stakeholders, these practitioners seemed to be working on behalf of authorities who would ultimately determine outcomes. Moreover, they displayed a facility with butcher paper, masking tape, and colored markers that felt gimmicky to me, much less serious than the risky and demanding business of agreement-seeking "real" mediation. Their work seemed passive and too easy. Perhaps I was evolving, still naively protective of the doctrines of my earliest training.

I needed reassurance of my professionalism, of my grasp of when, how, and why mediation works. My entry into new conflict realms and teaching at the university level required diligence in that regard, and those new colleagues and their writings were there for me. Not competitive, despite the very limited demand for the work that we all wanted, we argued earnestly and elevated one another and revealed, among so many things, that being grounded differently, being mainly academics or mainly practitioners, was our advantage.

I learned a lot from adapting to work in non-labor mediation and from the others on that frontier. Jerry Cor-

mick, Gail Bingham, Susan Carpenter, Peter Adler, and Lawrence Susskind come to mind. I met Linda Singer, Michael Lewis, and Margaret Shaw. I discovered journal articles that I reread to this day. Lon Fuller, Frank Sander, Stephen Goldberg, Lawrence Susskind, Joseph Stulberg, and Leonard Riskin provided me with explanations and values and eventually personal counsel.

Fuller, who was grounded in collective bargaining, explained in scholarly terms what I had experienced. I recall that I found his article to be a wonderful gift, implying that there was serious intellectual thinking to be done about the work in which I was engaged. It elevated my work. He argued that mediation is more apt when determining norms (transactions) than in norm enforcement (settling disputes arising out of asserted legal and contractual rights). I agree with that, despite the fact that mediation's great growth strongly suggests otherwise. Fuller emphasized the role of the parties' enlightened self-interest and the importance of working well with the agents of the stakeholders. Those points, and others, were confirming of my labor mediation experience.

Sander and Goldberg amplified and reinforced the labor mediators' belief that mediation is only one element of a repertoire of strategies to be applied where they are apt, not an end in itself. Riskin gave us a nomenclature with which we could communicate more effectively and explained that even within mediation there is an array of strategies to be mastered. He asserted wisely that the notion of "real" mediation is of no more value than an official definition of pizza. Stulberg and Susskind examined the elusive concept of neutrality and the challenges to true professionalism that lie in how we define success.

It seems in retrospect that a fundamental result for me was an acquired comfort with unresolved doctrinal ambiguity. My grounding has not changed. My labor mediator

roots are deep and reassuring. But, decades later, I have come around some, and I think I've gained flexibility, which supports versatility.

To be effective in environmental disputes. I not only needed to shift from the two-party model to a multi-party process. I had to operate within the very complicated and profound consequences of not achieving closure. The laws and regulatory regimes had to be recognized, as did the societal, ecological, and political impacts. I found that the "environmental" rubric covered a very broad and undefined variety of conflicts, many of which were caught in a seamless web of political and social issues that were critical to their settlement, e.g. not-in-my-backyard siting conflicts.

The environmental work also took me into a variety of conflicts based on contentions by American Indian tribes regarding their sovereignty and treaty rights. There were plenty of cross-cultural interactions in my labor cases, but none that were so explicit. Opportunities to work in Canada, England, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, South Africa, Japan, and some of the nations that were reborn following the collapse of the Soviet Union, were also invaluable sources of insight as I attempted to explain and apply my American perspective. Twice a year for many years, students from six African countries came to the Marquette Center for Dispute Resolution Education, where I continued teaching, and they kept me humble and curious about my work here in the United States.

When I drafted rules and regulations for a national labor mediation agency in Bulgaria, I had been the head of such an agency in Wisconsin. As the work went on, I became increasingly aware of how our policies and practices were rooted in our laws, economic system, and mores regarding labor-management relations. In my recent work at the University of Amsterdam helping establish a public mediation

program, I have experienced how a culture seemingly similar to our own can view conflict profoundly differently and yet suffer the same undesirable consequences of impasse—and benefit, as we do, from mediation.

Eventually, arrogance suggested that if I could have success as I defined it (i.e., voluntary agreements on a broad spectrum of environmental conflicts), I could probably transplant my doctrine and skills, with my ability to flex and accommodate a little, to pretty much any sort of dispute. I decided that I would not involve myself in the divorces of others, but otherwise I was ready to wade into any subject matter, and I did. (It was my presumption that family conflicts were not only beyond the scope of my training but exceeded my capacity to deal with overt emotions. Much later, this presumption was tested when I provided mediation in a number of clergy sex abuse matters. I believe that I can claim some success in those cases, but I also experienced a sense of burnout that was new to me.) My thought was that mediation, like writing, was a cross-cutting process and skill and that there was nothing particularly environmental or labor-related about it.

I returned to state government in 1983 when Tony Earl, my friend at Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources, became governor and appointed me secretary of Industry, Labor and Human Relations. It was a department that included a broad variety of programs, including safety codes, equal rights, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, workforce training, and a great deal more. Our new administration inherited a scandalous deficit in the unemployment insurance fund that could be overcome only by raising taxes in a very selective manner. The governor believed that should be done on the basis of an agreement among both political parties and both chambers of the legislature. He saw it as a mediation, and he knew me as a mediator. I met publicly and privately with the legisla-

tive leaders, and we got it done. My belief in the potential of the process was reinforced. I spent the remainder of the governor's four-year term learning a lot about managing in government and regulating. I also attempted to manage a state office of dispute resolution from my position as a cabinet secretary.

When we failed to gain reelection, I returned to my eclectic practice, hoping that my time as a Democratic public official hadn't compromised my acceptability as a neutral, and was invited by Gail Bingham, who was at the time leading an environmental conflict resolution program in the Washington, DC-based Conservation Foundation, to affiliate with her program. It was my great good fortune to join the small number of individuals acting as convenors and facilitators in negotiated rulemaking processes being initiated mainly by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). I began with work on regulations developing at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and over the years worked with the EPA, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Energy, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Department of Education as well as their counterparts in a number of states throughout the country. (I was also very fortunate to become the favorite mediator of Tommy Thompson, the Republican governor who put me out of my position with the state and whom I had worked with successfully in the unemployment compensation negotiations while he was the minority leader in the State Assembly.)

Regulatory negotiations were mainly the brainchild of Philip Harter, a conflict resolution colleague and administrative law expert who recognized and wrote about the potential for substantially reducing delay and elevating the quality of, and compliance with, administrative rules by inviting stakeholders to participate with the regulatory agency in the drafting of those rules. The process of deter-

mining whether such negotiations were apt (convening) and the actual management of the processes that went forward (facilitating) were more than intriguing to me. They seemed to be familiar components of mediation that might be informed by political savvy.

Obviously, the convening process in which the conflict at hand is assessed for mediation feasibility is in many ways an enlarged and explicitly identified version of the assessment most mediators make at the threshold of their engagement. What seems peculiar to these large-scale, multiparty, policy-making negotiations is that the assessment includes the extremely critical determination of what parties should participate as negotiators if a proper settlement is to be obtained. It's not a matter of plaintiffs and defendants, unions and employers, or spouses. Rather there is the need to identify and bring to the negotiations both obvious and less well-known entities that are critical to the efficacy of the negotiations. I believe that having worked among political actors, activists, and affected communities has given me an advantage.

Indeed, negotiated rulemaking exposed how the more established mediation processes worked, as if by examining an elephant one came to understand the components of a mouse. As the anatomy of the process was expanded to include more players, it became both necessary and easier to see that anatomy. It established that the same anatomy occurred in small group mediations, but without explicit reference.

Moreover, negotiated rulemaking reinforced my view of mediation as a cross-cutting process. Its application to environmental rulemaking was soon recognized as appropriate to regulating an array of administrative responsibilities. The process put a premium on the importance of grasping political realities, a skill that I felt I had acquired as a government official. And most importantly, by its partici-

pative nature, negotiated rulemaking seemed to promise to enhance liberal democracy, vindicating the preference that I shared with Lon Fuller for the mediation of transactions rather than settling rights-based disputes. Last, negotiated rulemaking required mediation that Riskin describes as facilitative/broad, which also comported with the labor mediation doctrine that I had absorbed years before.

Negotiated rulemaking also resonated with the political traditions of Wisconsin. Beginning in the early twentieth century, Wisconsin was a political laboratory mainly influenced by the economist John R. Commons, who led us to believe, among many other things, that government policies informed by stakeholders of all perspectives were most likely to serve us well. (Sadly, we seem to have left all that behind recently.) The department that I led was the inheritor and implementor of that wisdom, and I was a true believer.

An affiliation with the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University allowed me to work in Oregon, where progressive politics were supporting such approaches to public policy making on the state level. It provided an opportunity for me to think more systematically about what I had done and what I had learned.

Actually, mediation has always provided an abundance of time for self-assessment. Sitting in airports and airplanes, driving my car, and standing by in the halls of public buildings have provided a lot of opportunities to wonder about what happened to me. Why do I seem to be pretty good at this? Am I talented? Why am I able to work well with individuals and organizations I disapprove of and, at times, even admire them for their skills? Why am I uncomfortable co-mediating, except with Susan Podziba? How does this process work? Why do I like it so much? Is there a personal factor that argues against formulaic theories? Does it coincide with my growing up as a marginal-

ized observer of ordinary people? Does it coincide with my politics?

What about the pure enjoyment—the psychic payoff? What else has done that for me? I'd say playing jazz in college. There seems to be a real analogy there. Or a metaphor. Or an explanation.

On the surface, neither jazz nor mediation is subject to a consensus definition; but both are mainly ensemble performances, and, in my experience, they are both essentially improvised performances. A jazz musician draws in the moment from what bandmates are playing and a repertoire acquired from years of performing and listening to the performances of others. To that is added the musician's skills with an instrument, mood, and taste. A mediator also has a repertoire of responses learned from training and experience that is called upon in the moment without much cerebration. (The rests are as important as the notes.)

In mediation, perhaps "taste" is better referred to as "judgment," and like taste, it is augmented by perceptive powers, mainly listening. I think talented jazz musicians and mediators have an "ear" that takes them beyond what may be gained from training, study, and practice. I think that gift has its origins in their early environment and even genetics. Perhaps it should be referred to as intuition. How many superb musicians come from unmusical homes and neighborhoods? They may sit down and play without a lesson or the ability to read musical notation. (As I mentioned at the start, I think my mom had a fine "ear," and maybe that was one of her gifts to me.)

I think training comes from all of one's experience, not only so-called formal training and mentoring. Among jazz musicians and mediators there are those who are "natural," those who are "technical," and those who enjoy the excellence that comes of both talent and training. There is valu-

able work to be done by all of these mediators, and I hope they are deployed optimally. I worry, though, that some mediators, talented and otherwise, have become “over-trained”—that their intuitions have been smothered by lessons, doctrine, “recipes,” and the fear of “errors.” Some jazz listeners have observed that contemporary musicians, who are far more likely to be conservatory-trained than their predecessors, never drop a beat or miss a note. And thus they lose the feature that is at the heart of the idiom, the essential quality that brought jazz to the attention of conservatories in the first place.

Both jazz and mediation are creative processes producing unanticipated new outcomes, even for familiar undertakings. The tune has been played a thousand times, but never quite like that. It’s just the latest collective bargaining agreement, but it responds very well to the present environment.

The success of the ensemble performance, in both cases, depends on a shared understanding of underlying structure (chord progression, negotiation principles). That explains why we must smuggle training into our discussions with some parties, and why working repeatedly with some is such a pleasure. We anticipate them, and that augments our capacity to respond artfully. (I understand that some great jazz musicians, known for their rapport while performing, have had no use for each other off the bandstand.) At their best, both performances capture the ironic potential of orthodoxy and discipline combined with freedom. They are artistic, creative, informed by study and practice, and elevated by talent. My belief that my work has features that exist in art elates me.

Extending the jazz analogy, negotiated rulemaking seems like an opportunity to move from playing in a quartet to leading a big band. No longer a few others to make music with, but many more. Leading is a different

responsibility, more than collaborating and contributing. But the core improvisational, creative process is there, even though there is a score-like agenda, and agreement remains the preferred outcome. There are more players to cope with and therefore a more explicit structure to create and follow (negotiated ground rules), but the relationship between agreed-upon underlying structure and creativity, realized by presentations and listening, is still key. And the potential for cacophony is truly present.

Many factors contributed to my capacities as a practitioner. There was my mom's influence, however it was transmitted, combined with my early years on the periphery. Then there was the excellent mentoring and doctrine that I received from the mediators I worked with early on and the lessons that I receive to this day from generous colleagues. Finally, there is my teaching and the writing of the field's great scholars. It seems to me that these factors, combined with my time in responsible positions in government as well as my inclination toward expanded democracy (as in industrial democracy), give me a particular advantage in regulatory negotiations as well as other matters of public importance. (My cases included school district desegregation, the restoration of rivers, statewide school funding disputes, intergovernmental conflicts of many kinds, etc.). Maybe being a Midwestern American male of a certain age and era is relevant. Perhaps those factors combined to place me in a niche, like a piano player who, despite the prevailing fashions, prefers to play in a certain style.

That's all speculative and intellectual. It's an analogy that can be strained and extended even farther to prove its aptness, but none of that explains the sizzle. The thrill of it isn't only in its outcomes, but in the performance itself. Justice and good policies are great when they result, but "life is on the wire," and when you go to a mediation not

knowing what to expect or to a gig wondering how your bandmates will perform and something beautiful happens, the payoff is visceral. It's rooted, I believe, in the essential element of improvisation, the riskiness of it, the sense of yourself after you stepped onto the wire, pretending perhaps to be confident, and find your way safely across the chasm. Vince Lombardi, the ultimate font of wisdom in Wisconsin, told his players that celebrating in the end zone is unbecoming and that they should act as if they'd been there before. I get that, although I will admit to the impulse. (It wouldn't be cool.)

For me, another important source of enrichment is the support, provocation, inspiration, and camaraderie of colleagues. In 1987 and again in 1996, Frank Sander invited a group of mediation practitioners and scholars to informal two-day conferences in Maine that left us wanting more. We were peers, eager to learn from each other, and the format exceeded our expectations. In 1998, under the auspices of the Western Justice Center, led by our colleague Bill Drake and located in Pasadena, California, a near replication of that group reconvened and initiated a series of annual meetings, mainly in the Boston area, that continues to this day. Individuals have come and gone from our ranks—too often, sadly—but because we are diverse in our practices and career paths, we continue to elevate each other in remarkable ways. Just as my early exposure to Fuller elevated my sense of my work, the opportunity to interact with these successful, busy, thoughtful colleagues also contributes to what the work means to me.

Finally, mediation, like jazz, is undefined, so to forecast its future requires confidence as to what “it” is, and such confidence seems naive. I believe that the wonderful potential of the mediation I have practiced is transactional and holds promise for enhancing democracy and public policy, although I suspect that this is only one of the

niches that mediation will occupy. I have never been one to describe mediation as a “cause” or a path to social justice. That has always seemed dreamy to me. Nonetheless, for my mentors and peers—and for me—mediation has been a central and meaningful element of our lives. In contrast, for many recent entrants to the field, it is work that promises a good lifestyle to entrepreneurs and the semi-retired. Jazz lovers have referred to certain performances, and certain musicians, as “commercial,” and never with admiration. The implication is that careers designed mainly to gain popularity and financial return do not deserve the respect due to those who would advance something more, something of worth.

I fear, though, that in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, mediation’s commercial potential will be what comes to the fore. The Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II contributed enormously to my worldview and that of my mediation peers. The coronavirus pandemic is likely to do the same for those now entering the dispute resolution field. Our current interest in videoconferencing and all things online that allow us to work, albeit remotely, seems of particular currency and promise. In recent years, probably due to necessity and the patient and tactful treatment I have received from Colin Rule, I have become less resistant to some online dispute resolution processes. But my belief that face-to-face interactions are the heart and soul of mediation persists. I worry about the convergence of decreased face-to-face mediation and the commercialism to which I have just referred.

We have always asserted that mediation is a time-and-cost-saver. Now we can reinforce that claim by offering remote service and exploit the seductiveness of leading-edge technology as well. Will the primers and webinars on videoconferencing technology that promise, at least implicitly, to “grow your practice” prescribe best practices

and eclipse our interests in democracy and public policy? Will we reassess the proper mixture of the technical and the intuitive or “natural?” Or will the mediators of the future be the masters of their instruments *and* the providers of the greatest value that is the potential of their work? I cannot say, but to those new to mediation and the field in general, I wish all that I have enjoyed: the joy of shared performance, inspiring and supportive colleagues, endless exploration and learning, and the occasional thrill of a challenging undertaking ending in success for all concerned.

