

## PCACAC Reflections: Looking Back Over an Amazing Journey

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Mentors and role models. Collegiality and conviviality. These words spring to mind when I think back over more than three decades of involvement in the admission profession and in PCACAC.

I came to Mary Washington College in 1979, after first having worked as a middle school guidance counselor. When I landed that job in admissions, who could ever imagine that I would walk away from Mary Washington some 38 years later—after having a rich and rewarding career, filled with abundant blessings. And PCACAC was an integral part of that journey.

At Mary Washington, I was incredibly fortunate to have Dr. H. Conrad Warlick as my boss in the admissions office. Conrad became a great mentor and role model—he saw potential in me that I would never have recognized in myself. Ultimately, I would have the good fortune of succeeding him as the chief enrollment officer at Mary Washington, after he left admissions for other administrative posts. Now in his nineties, Conrad remains a cherished personal friend today.



Conrad Warlick speaks at  
PCACAC 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
Homestead Resort 2015

From Conrad, I learned the nuts-and-bolts of the admissions profession—both the science and the art of our work. More importantly, I learned the heart and soul of the business—always keeping the student’s best interests at the forefront and striving to create a good match between student and institution. And I learned that high ethical standards are the bedrock of admissions.

I also quickly learned that this is a collegial enterprise. Our college and university associates are not cutthroat competitors—they form a mutually supportive and caring community. Yes, we all endeavor to fill our entering classes, but in doing that work we share tight bonds, and often forge lasting friendships with one another. And strong relationships with our partners on the secondary school side are an equally essential element of our profession, as we strive together to guide students through the transition process.

Through Conrad’s example, I also learned the importance of getting involved and giving back to

the profession, though organizations like PCACAC and NACAC. He had served as president of PCACAC in 1977-78, and was honored with the Apperson Award in 1980. Years later, in 1993, PCACAC asked him to present the Apperson Award to me, a huge surprise and one of the greatest honors of my professional life.

My very first involvement with PCACAC came in 1981, during my second year in admissions, when Conrad volunteered me (without my knowledge) to serve on the planning committee for the annual conference in Canaan Valley, West Virginia.

From that first time dipping my toe in the water, I continued to get more and more involved in PCACAC. Eventually, I was able to be a national assembly delegate, to serve for many years on the Admission Practices committee, and, ultimately, to be elected PCACAC president. One of my fondest PCACAC memories was serving as president for our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference in 1990, which was attended by most of the organization's prior presidents. My dear friend and presidential successor, Audrey Hill, really pulled a rabbit out of the hat to make that gala celebration happen! If you haven't heard about it, be sure to read her story!



Recognition of Past-presidents  
PCACAC 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
Roanoke, Virginia 1990



Celebrating with Audrey Hill  
PCACAC 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

My service in PCACAC led to opportunities to contribute at the national level through NACAC. I served on the national Admission Practices Committee, as Chief Teller for the national assembly, and as Vice President on the executive committee. Each of these was an incredibly rewarding experience, stemming directly from that first small step to volunteer with PCACAC. Admissions work is difficult and stressful. However, as members of PCACAC, we really do know how to celebrate! Our ranks are filled with wonderful, fun-loving characters—warm, gregarious people who are generous with their hugs, who love a good joke, and who might just enjoy a drink or two on occasion. Early on in my career, Conrad introduced me to many of his admissions friends—legendary PCACAC leaders like Richmond’s Tom Pollard and Pam Spence, UVA’s Jean Rayburn and Jack Blackburn, and Ed Cox and John Conkright from Randolph-Macon. And there were also many unforgettable figures on the secondary school side—such as Marion Flagg, Joe Monte, and Sallie Scott. One thing you could always be sure of—whenever PCACAC gathered, a good time would be had by all. That tradition has continued through many generations of PCACAC members—and still endures today.

Through more than 30 years of working in admissions, there were so many wonderful times—and wonderful people who became cherished associates and friends. There were my Mary Washington teammates Jenifer Blair and Ali Gauch, both of whom also served as PCACAC Presidents, as well as a host of other key UMW staff members. In addition, I was proud to mentor many young admissions counselors who were just entering the profession, some of whom continue careers in admissions. And, of course, there were the myriad colleagues from across the region and the nation that I met through PCACAC and NACAC. It would be impossible to name them all, but each has left an indelible mark on my life.

Throughout my professional journey, PCACAC was always there, representing the highest values and ethical standards of the admission profession. It was there providing an essential support network and a place where good friends could all celebrate together. I am forever grateful for the experiences that PCACAC has given me.



Five Generations of Mary Washington Admissions Leaders  
Ali Gauch, Conrad Warlick, Marty Wilder, Jenifer Blair, Melissa Yakabouski