Chapter 1

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: LESSONS LEARNED IN ARBITRATION AND WITHIN THE ACADEMY: 50 YEARS AFTER THE *STEELWORKERS TRILOGY*

William H. Holley Jr.*

Before I begin, I'd like to announce that in a very few moments we might witness a once-in-lifetime event. For the first time in his 25-year membership, Jim Odom may actually sit through a presidential address. We shall know the outcome in less than an hour.

Over 20 years ago, Jim Odom, long-time restaurant critic for the *Birmingham News,* provided me with one of my best lessons learned. Jim said, "Never dine at a place where you can afford to stay." For 20 years, I have tested that lesson. Jim is right.

Now, I want to extend a very special "thank you" to the Academy for throwing such a big party tomorrow night for Betty and me. For tomorrow, Betty and I will celebrate our 42nd wedding anniversary. No one could expect more for an anniversary. We are honored and deeply appreciative to the Academy.

It's great to be back in Philadelphia, not only the city of brotherly love, but where seven past Academy presidents, Allen Dash, Sylvester Garrett, Walter Gershenfeld, Lewis Gill, Eli Rock, William Simkin, Rolf Valtin, and arbitrator pioneer and NAA founder George Taylor once resided.

I was admitted to the Academy in Philadelphia 24 years ago, just down the street from here. I recall quite vividly the new member orientation, where many of the giants of our profession met with the new members and told us about (1) the history of the Academy, (2) its purposes, and (3) its legacy. Quite frankly, I was so intimidated that I didn't know whether to introduce myself or just simply walk up and ask for their autographs.

I recall quite vividly the new member reception. Eighteen other new members and I were lined up to go through the reception

*Member, National Academy of Arbitrators, Auburn, AL

line. There, I met two members of the Membership Committee who would later become presidents of the Academy.

First, I met Margery Gootnick (Rochester, NY). I introduced myself. I said, "I'm Bill Holley." Margery looked at my name tag and said, "Auburn, Alabama." Then she hesitated and in all seriousness Margery asked, "Now, just exactly, where is Alabama?" In all seriousness as an astute new member, I explained, "Alabama was between Georgia and Mississippi, north of Florida and south of Tennessee." Margery (making a motion with her hand) replied, "Oh, somewhere down there."

Years later, Margery had proven that she had studied geography. Someone must have given her a map for her birthday. One day out of the blue, Margery called Betty and me and said, "I have a hearing down close to you and want to pay you a visit." We said, "Great!" We asked, "Where?" Margery said, "Greensboro, North Carolina."

I said, "No problem. Come on down; it's only about a five-hour drive." Margery said, "Oh." We never heard another word about her visit.

Also at the new member reception, I met Tom Roberts (Los Angeles, CA). As I approached Tom, I extended my hand to shake his hand and to introduce myself. I said, "I'm Bill Holley." Tom Roberts said, "Step aside, young man; I want to meet your wife. I heard she's a knockout." So I was thoroughly oriented to the Academy in Philadelphia.

Now it's time to get serious. Two years ago, I was elected to be President-elect. A year ago, I became president. As a tradition, I knew that I would have to make this presidential address. Some time ago, I began to prepare. I sought advice from my best source. I asked Betty a few questions in my preparation.

- First, I asked, "Shall I try to be as profound as George Nicolau was in his presidential address?" Betty responded, "You are not profound."
- I said, "OK. Then shall I be scholarly like Ted St. Antoine and Dennis Nolan?" Betty said, "You are a retired academic. You haven't been scholarly in the last ten years."
- I asked, "Then shall I try to make the address personal like Jim Sherman, Jim Harkless, or Barbara Zausner?" Betty said, "Bill, you are not very personal."
- I said, "All right. Then, shall I be funny like Margery Gootnick?" Betty said, "You aren't funny."

- I said, "What shall I do?" Betty said, "For one thing, you can stop asking me these stupid questions. Just be yourself."
- I said, "OK. That's what I'll do."

So I will turn to my subject: "Lessons Learned in Arbitration and Within the Academy: 50 Years After the *Steelworkers Trilogy*." I would like to look back at several subjects over the last 50 years.

First is the arbitration process. What has happened to the arbitration process since the *Steelworkers Trilogy*? For the answer, I rely on two of the giants in the Academy; they knew or know the giants; they walked among the giants; they are two of the giants of the Academy: Dick Mittenthal and Arnie Zack.

This is what Dick Mittenthal said:

> What is quite remarkable and extraordinary about the arbitration process is that, after the last 50 years, the arbitration process has not really changed. Despite the thousands of unions and management, thousands of contracts, differences in industries, locations, etc., the arbitration process remains basically the same. It is this sameness that is extraordinary(Conversation with Richard Mittenthal).

Fortunately, labor arbitration is still a system of self-government. As Justice Douglas wrote 50 years ago in *Warrior & Gulf*, "…the grievance machinery under the Collective Bargaining Agreement is at the very heart of the system of industrial self-government."

50 years since the *Steelworkers Trilogy*,

- The parties still negotiate the governing document.
- They still design their own arbitration system.
- They still determine the number and types of arbitrators.
- They still determine the subjects which are arbitrable.
- They still agree to present their cases to an impartial person whom they themselves have selected.
- They still agree in advance to abide by the decision of this impartial person.
- Arbitrators still examine the evidence and determine whether the terms of the contract are applied correctly.

Arnie Zack said, "The arbitration process still belongs to the parties; it's the arbitrator's hearing and the arbitrator's decision. Collective bargaining is still a continuing process. Collective bargaining and arbitration are jointly owned by the parties and it is that joint ownership that makes it work" (e-mail from Arnold M. Zack).

Equally important, after all these years, arbitrators themselves must never lose respect for the process or for the grievant. Arbitrators as well as advocates may have been involved in hundreds, even thousands of arbitration hearings. But for the grievant, it probably is his or her first and last arbitration. The arbitration hearing date is probably one of the most important days of the life of the grievant (e-mail from Rosemary Townley).

We must always remember that the grievant is someone's mother or father—someone's brother or sister; someone's son or daughter. They deserve respect. As arbitrators and advocates, we must always respect the grievant and the process.

Another subject I would like to address is the controversial subject of arbitrators' oversized egos. What lessons have we learned about arbitrators' oversized egos over the last 50 years? We have learned that 50 years after the *Steelworkers Trilogy*, arbitrators are still accused of having oversized egos. Of course, I admit that this accusation may only be a false perception. More important, this accusation is certainly not true of any arbitrator in this room.

For 32 years at Auburn University, I was involved in academic research. So I decided to take on this controversial subject with the same seriousness and enthusiasm as I would an academic research project. After two years of investigation, for the first time today, I can reveal that there are actually several reasons why we arbitrators have oversized egos:

These are my findings:

- First, we arbitrators sit at the head of the table at arbitration hearings; most of the time, we are the only one at the head table. Unlike today, I have to share this head table with eight other people. If this were an arbitration hearing, I would be the only one here at the head table.
- Second, we arbitrators are in charge of the arbitration hearing and we conduct and control the hearing.
- Third, we arbitrators make final and binding decisions (Conversation with David A. Petersen). As former president George Bush himself would say in his own unique way of expressing himself, "*Arbitrators Are Deciders.*" Now that statement is from a former president of the United States of America.
- Fourth, the parties agree in advance that they will abide by the arbitrator's decision.

- Fifth, we arbitrators realize that our decisions are rarely appealed. And even if our decisions are appealed, our decisions are rarely ever overturned (actually around 1 percent).
- Sixth, sometimes at the arbitration hearing, the advocates will address us as "Your Honor." Although I prefer "Your Highness," I am pleased to accept "Your Honor."
- Seventh, even after we arbitrators are selected and before the hearing, the parties frequently try to accommodate personal needs, e.g., make hotel reservations, suggest places to dine, and on and on.

Even at the hearing, the parties continue to try to accommodate our personal needs, e.g., they offer us coffee, water, etc.; they ask if our chair is comfortable; they ask if they should adjust the room temperature. For all of these reasons, one may easily conclude that there is compelling evidence that arbitrators are justifiably entitled to have oversized egos.

Now like all research projects, there are at least two sides of an inquiry. Therefore, these findings are not yet conclusive. As an academic researcher, I was compelled to continue my search for the "truth of the matter asserted." These are my findings on why we arbitrators should not have oversized egos:

- First, we arbitrators have to realize that, due to the typical way in which arbitrators are selected (by the striking method), when we are finally selected, we are not the first choice of either party. We know that, when we walk into the arbitration hearing room, we are "only acceptable" to both parties.
- Second, we arbitrators must also acknowledge that, when we enter the arbitration hearing room, we know less about the arbitration than anyone in the room.
- Third, we arbitrators will soon learn that, after the hearing and the decision is sent to the parties, a mere 50 percent of the parties will think that we were smart enough to have been the arbitrator. The other 50 percent will simply wonder how in the world the AAA, FMCS, or NMB ever agreed to list us on their respective arbitrator rosters.
- Last and probably the most conclusive evidence of why arbitrators should not have oversized egos is, sooner or later, every one of us arbitrators knows that we still have to go home where we are told in no uncertain words:

- pick up your the clothes,
- wash the dishes,
- mow the lawn,
- watch the children,
- walk the dogs,
- clean up your study,
- take out the garbage, and on and on.

These are not words that support an arbitrator's oversized ego.

So what have I concluded (a lesson learned) from this academic study? I have learned that the parties should accommodate the arbitrator's ego at the hearing and until he or she renders the decision.

This leads me to the next subject which I would like to address: The subject of arbitrator decisions. First and foremost, 50 years after the *Steelworkers Trilogy*, arbitrator decisions still must conform to the "Essence of the Collective Bargaining Agreement."

In *Enterprise*, Justice Douglas wrote that the arbitrator's decision is "legitimate only as long as it draws its essence from the collective bargaining agreement" and only as long as the arbitrator "does not sit to dispense his own brand of industrial justice."

The best advice on decisions I have ever received came from Bill Murphy, a former Academy president. In my early years as an arbitrator, I told Bill Murphy what a difficult time I was having making decisions. Bill said, "Treat every decision as if it is your first and every decision as if it is your last. Treat every decision as your first because you will work hard to make sure it's right: treat it as your last because you will be totally objective" (Conversation with Bill Murphy).

Similarly, Bill Murphy once told Beber Helburn the following: "Assume that you will be struck dead on your way home from mailing in your arbitration award. The award will have no effect on your career. You can go to heaven with a clear conscience having done the best you could" (e-mail from Beber Helburn). These are good lessons learned from Bill Murphy.

We arbitrators all know that

- Every case is different.
- Every decision is difficult.
- Every decision depends on a relevant set of different facts and circumstances.

Now turning to writing decisions, there is a general notion that arbitrators write decisions for the loser. There is a reason: You don't have to convince the winner that he is right; he already knows that. However, you may need to convince the loser why you did not agree with his or her position.

Ken Jennings, my colleague who worked for years as a labor relations representative, told me that when he received an arbitrator's decision, he looked first at the last page. If he won, he didn't need to read the decision to find out why he was right; he already knew he was right. However, if he lost, he would closely examine every single page to find out why and how the arbitrator got it wrong (Conversation with Kenneth M. Jennings). The best lesson learned is that arbitrators should address each of the arguments from each side. If an advocate believes an argument is important enough to present to the arbitrator, it is important enough for the arbitrator to address the argument.

Over the years, I have learned that arbitrators have something in common with high-profile professional coaches and professional athletes.

You think arbitrators make that kind of money. Oh no!

Coaches and professional athletes are considered by the fans as good as their last game. A lesson I've learned from my arbitration career is that arbitrators are considered by the parties as good as their last decision.

One type of arbitrator decision is the bench decision. A lesson I learned over my arbitration career is, try never to render a bench decision. My first experience with a bench decision was with a group of drivers of logging trucks. At the beginning of the hearing, I noticed that each one of these drivers was about 6'5" and weighed 250 lbs. By the time I had ruled against them on an arbitrability issue, they seemed to have grown to 8' tall and 300 lbs. In order for me to leave the arbitration hearing room, I had to walk past each one of them and shake every one's hand. For years, the best view in my mind was the Holiday Inn in Decatur, Alabama, in my rear view mirror as I was speeding out of the parking lot.

Dennis Nolan, former Academy president, has wisely provided a lesson learned on bench decisions. Dennis recommends, "Write the decision, place the decision in an envelope; leave the envelope on a table at the hearing room; leave the hearing room; direct the parties to open the envelope 30 minutes after you have left the hearing room (e-mail from Dennis Nolan).

Allen Ponak also has offered an excellent lesson learned. Allen recommends, "Tell the parties that you will call them by phone with the bench decision as you leave the outskirts of town" (presentation at the Fall Education Conference, Miami, FL 2007).

However, the most important reason for avoiding bench decisions is that you have to make up your mind too quickly. Admittedly, after a hearing, we arbitrators usually believe that we know how the decision will turn out (maybe 75 to 90 percent of the time). However, it is that 10 to 25 percent that should cause us not to decide the outcome too quickly (e-mail from Elvis Stephens).

Another lesson learned about arbitration 50 years after the *Steelworkers Trilogy* is that developing a career as an arbitrator has not changed; it still takes time. The old adage is true: *Don't quit your day job.*

In investigating this subject, I considered the careers of three of the giants of the profession, former presidents of the Academy. One told me that he/she was not selected during the first five years as an arbitrator; one said he was selected only once in his first year; another was selected for only three cases in the first year. Personally, I was not selected at all during my first two years.

In 1974, after completing my application and soliciting references, I was notified by AAA that I had been named to the National Labor Panel of the American Arbitration Association. I was very proud of myself. I went home that very night and told Betty that I had better pack my duffle bag because I am now an arbitrator. I am now on the National Panel of Arbitrators.

Two years later, I had not heard a single word from AAA. Surely, they had not been sending out my name. So I called the AAA office in Charlotte. The AAA Tribunal Administrator said she would check. A day later, she called and told me that my name had been sent out 14 times over the last two years and I had not been selected for a single case. That night, I went home and unpacked my duffle bag.

What lesson can we learn from the experiences from presidents of the Academy? If you are an aspiring arbitrator and you have not been selected in five years or two years, don't be discouraged. You too may one day become president of the National Academy of Arbitrators.

As I indicated earlier, my arbitration career was slow to develop. As a result, I believe that I qualify to offer a bit of advice to those aspiring arbitrators to help boost their careers. My first piece of advice is based on my own personal experience. I believe you

should consider this simple suggestion: *Change your last name. Your last name may be holding you back.* You should change your last name to one similar to an established arbitrator. In the selection process, maybe the parties will confuse you with an established arbitrator. For example, in the Academy Directory, there are three Jones listed; there are seven Williams. I suggest that you change your last name to Williams; you will surely increase your chances of being included in the arbitrator selection mix.

From my personal experience during my first years as an arbitrator, I would walk in a hearing room. Someone would say, "You certainly have been around a long time for someone so young." I was quite stunned. I did not know what to say. On other occasions, someone would walk up to me and say, "Arbitrator Holley, I have read several of your decisions over the years." I thought to myself, how can that be? I knew this was one of my first hearings. Finally, I discovered that they thought they had selected Dr. J. Fred Holly (Knoxville, TN) and they got me. All I can say is, "Good for me."

Over the years as my career developed, advocates would ask me, "Are you related to J. Fred Holly?" I would have to say, "No, but he helped me get started in my career as an arbitrator." They would say, "Oh, did you intern with Dr. Holly?" I would answer, "No, the parties thought they had selected J. Fred and they selected me." So, my advice is simple: *Change your last name; it could boost your arbitration career.*

Another lesson learned to advance your career came to me from Jack Clarke. I remember the first time I met Jack Clarke; this occurred in the early 1980s. Jack and I were involved in separate hearings at the FMCS office in Birmingham, Alabama. We decided to meet for lunch.

Jack walked into restaurant and said, "I'm Jack Clarke; how much do you charge?" No beating around the bush for this Jack Clarke. Of course, I was a little stunned. I thought at least Jack would ask me a few personal questions, like where do you live, what do you teach, are you married, etc., but not Jack Clarke. He likes to get to the core. That's why he is such an excellent arbitrator.

I told Jack that my fee was the same as the fee I am paid when I serve as an instructor for continuing education programs at Auburn. Jack immediately told me, "You are too cheap. No one is going to select you. They won't think you are any good. If you want to make it as an arbitrator, you have to raise your fee."

So I took Jack's advice to heart; I returned home and the next day I called the AAA and FMCS and raised my fee. Guess what? The

parties thought I had become a better arbitrator. I was selected more frequently and off I went on my arbitration career.

I should have learned years ago from my Uncle Lee, Lynne's Dad, when he said, "No one takes advice from someone who drives a Volkswagen; you drive a Cadillac, they'll take your advice" (Conversation with Leland Holley).

Another important lesson I learned about arbitrator careers came from Tom Roberts, former Academy president. Tom developed his own criteria by which you measure success as an arbitrator. We can now call this the Tom Roberts' Gold Standard.

One day at an Academy committee meeting, Tom asked me, "Do you know when an arbitrator can be considered a success?" I answered with a great deal of confidence, "Obviously, when you become a member of the National Academy of Arbitrators."

Tom responded, "Oh no, young man [he liked to call me young man]. You know that you are a successful arbitrator when your wife stops buying soap." Now, that's the Tom Roberts' Gold Standard.

Over the years as an arbitrator, a lesson I learned in arbitration is that you must expect the unexpected. After 34 years of arbitrating, here today I shall make a public confession as an arbitrator: When I began my career as an arbitrator, I was not quite ready. Similar to many other arbitrators in their preparations for a career as an arbitrator, I had taken a college class on labor arbitration taught by a member of the Academy, had taken courses offered by AAA and FMCS, had interned under Alex Simon for a year, and conducted mock arbitrations. Still, I was not ready for the unexpected.

In one of my first hearings, at the beginning, everything went smoothly. The parties agreed on the issue and they made their opening statements. I swore in the first witness. After preliminaries, the management attorney gave a document to the witness. The union attorney literally jumped out of his seat and declared, "*Voir dire,* Mr. Arbitrator, *voir dire.*" I did not know what the hell he was talking about. I almost overreacted and I almost said, "*Voir dire* to you, too, Mister," but I didn't. I knew that would have been very unprofessional.

So, as I do still when I don't know what to do, I asked the management attorney: "What is your position on this?" The management attorney replied, "Mr. Arbitrator, fine with me." Still not knowing what was going on, I said, "If it's fine with you, it's fine with me." Then, the union attorney started asking questions about the document. That's how I learned what *voir dire* means.

The lesson I learned is that "sometimes you just learn from listening." I remember what my parents repeatedly told me when I was growing up: "Bill, you don't learn anything when you are talking."

Now turning to lessons learned within the Academy, ten years ago when John Kagel was president and I was secretary–treasurer, John would say, "You know, Bill, being president of the National Academy of Arbitrators is like 'herding a bunch of cats.'" Now after a year as president, I can say with a great deal of confidence, "John, you got it right."

I can also say with a great deal of confidence that Byron Abernathy, former Academy president, got it right in 1983 (27 years ago) in his presidential address when he said, "The dominant commitment of this Academy throughout its history has been to the advancement of arbitration, not the advancement of arbitrators." That is as true today as it was 27 years ago, and I hope it will remain so.

Next, I will ask and attempt to answer a series of questions about the Academy.

First, how have the Academy members met what I will call the Douglas Standard?

If you recall, in *Warrior & Gulf*, Justice Douglas compared judges and arbitrators. He wrote, "The ablest judge cannot be expected to bring the same experience and competence to bear upon the determination of a grievance, because he cannot be similarly informed." How have our members performed as arbitrators? I believe the answer generally is, Academy members are doing pretty well.

- Only a very low percentage of our labor arbitration decisions are appealed.
- Of those decisions which are appealed, few are overturned.
- Very few members are disciplined for violating the Code of Professional Responsibility.
- There is no evidence of corruption by members of the Academy.
- To my knowledge, there are no arbitrators in jail (unlike some other professions).

So I must conclude that Academy members have performed very well as arbitrators.

The next question which has concerned me for years is, does the Academy expect too little of its members? The Academy has rigorous standards for membership admission. We do a great job of member selection. But does the Academy expect too little of its members after the initial membership admission?

Should we not expect members to attend and participate in fall education conferences, be active in their regions, or attend annual meetings? As I learned years ago in Officer Candidate School in the U.S. Army, the chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

We all know that the current reputation of the Academy has been built over the years on the accomplishments of its members. The Academy will retain its status and reputation through the works of its current members. Our weakest links affect the strength of the chain. The reputation of this Academy will be affected by its weakest links. We must expect more from our members who do not participate in Academy educational opportunities.

The next question is, as an Academy, how well have we met our defined purposes as stated in our constitution?

- The Academy has done a great job of protecting the integrity of arbitration.
- The *Amicus Brief* Committee (chaired by Terry Bethel) and the Committee on Professional Responsibility and Grievances (CPRG) (chaired by Ed Krinsky) take their work very seriously and do a great job of protecting the integrity of arbitration.
- The Membership Committee (chaired by Margie Brogan) assures us that only highly qualified arbitrators gain membership status by meeting rigorous admission standards.
- I believe that you can say that the *Amicus Brief* Committee and the CPRG are the "heart and soul" of the Academy and the Membership Committee is its "life blood."
- The various program committees at the national and regional levels provide excellent educational opportunities. The conclusion: Overall, I believe that the Academy continues to meet its constitutional purposes.

Internally, I would be remiss if I did not say that there is a perception by some that there is a small group of insiders who actually runs the Academy. I can say with a great deal of confidence that this is a self-perpetuating myth. The so-called in-group has an enormous amount of turnover (about 40 percent each year) with a never-ending group of volunteers who devote their time

and energies in making the Academy what it is. These volunteers make it happen at the national and regional levels (e-mail from Bonnie Bogue).

By working together, we shall continue to meet our constitutional purposes.

If a member wants to contribute, he or she can simply volunteer and grab hold to the Academy rope. Then, we can all pull together on the same rope.

Another lesson learned is that the Academy does not have enough visibility and influence. After attending ten regional meetings this year, I believe there is a general consensus across North America that too few union and management officials know about the National Academy of Arbitrators. If the Academy is ever to have influence, it must have visibility. There are over 600 member–ambassadors who must be committed to raising the Academy visibility.

In my second presidential column for the *Chronicle,* I entitled the column, "I'm Proud To Be a Member of the National Academy of Arbitrators and So Should You Be."

- I firmly believe it's OK to be proud of the National Academy of Arbitrators.
- I also firmly believe it's OK to be proud that you are a member of the National Academy of Arbitrators.
- I also firmly believe it's OK to tell others that you are proud of the National Academy of Arbitrators and that you are proud that you are a member.

I never will forget a visit I made to the Marshall Space Center in Huntsville, Alabama, about 30 years ago. On the wall was a picture of Dr. Werner Von Braun—A Real Rocket Scientist. His team of scientists developed the rockets which propelled us to the moon. On the caption below his picture read the following: Dr. Von Braun was asked, "To what do you owe your success?" Dr. Von Braun replied, "Late to bed, early to rise, work like hell, and advertise." Each of us as Academy members in our own way must be ambassadors of the Academy. Each of us must contribute to increase the Academy's visibility and influence. Increased visibility and influence can come only from the efforts of Academy members.

Another lesson I learned within the Academy is that two of the most important decisions a president makes is the selection

of the chair of the annual program committee and the chair of the host committee. In my deliberation, members told me that Bonnie Bogue was simply too busy—she had an active arbitration practice, she was already a Vice President, she writes articles for the *Chronicle,* she was a member of an orchestra, etc.—she was just too busy. My conclusion: Bonnie would be the perfect annual program chair. I was also told that Walt DeTreux was heavily committed. He is already the editor of the *Chronicle,* he has an active arbitration practice, he has young children, etc.—he's just too busy. My response: Walt would be the perfect chair of the host committee for the annual meeting.

My lesson learned is, if you need a job done well, ask a busy person. I am thankful that both Bonnie and Walt said "yes" and they have done a wonderful job.

A lesson I learned within the Academy is that, as president, you better have an Executive Secretary–Treasurer named David Petersen and a staff which includes the names Katie Kelley, Suzanne Kelley, and Lorine Cantrell. As I said at the Fall Education Conference in San Antonio, we now have the best Academy staff in the history of the Academy.

My final lesson learned is that, as an Academy president, you must have a supporting and contributing spouse. I can reveal today for the first time that I have known the Academy's hidden secret since 2007. I have known that the 2007 Nomination Committee wanted Betty to be president of the Academy, but found out she was not a member and did not qualify. The Nomination Committee decided to nominate me because they knew that, if they nominate me, Betty would then become president.

Now, as my final act, I have written a personal letter to the Academy.

> May 27, 2010
>
> Dear Academy:
>
> When I was first introduced to you in 1968 by Dr. Langston T. Hawley, my major professor and a long-time member of the Academy, and learned about you, I was determined then that, as my professional goal, I wanted to be a member of the National Academy of Arbitrators. Just becoming a member was as far as I could envision.

In 1986, when I became a member, during the new membership orientation, you introduced me to many of the giants of the profession. Over the years, I learned that the giants of the Academy were some of the most modest, interesting, and intelligent persons in the profession. They made me feel important when they would recognize me by my name. During discussion groups at fall education conferences, they would genuinely listen to what I had to say. They improved my confidence as an arbitrator and as a person.

Through discussions and exchange of experiences with other arbitrators in North America, you have made me a better arbitrator.

Through my membership in the Academy, you have given me credibility as an arbitrator.

Through your good works, you have helped retain integrity and maintain ethical standards in my chosen profession.

You have provided me with the opportunity to contribute to you in ways which I never thought possible.

You have introduced Betty and me to individuals throughout North America whom we would have never known existed without you.

You have enriched our lives through life-long friendships.

You have returned ten-fold what we have invested in our time and efforts.

We will be forever grateful to you.

It was a great honor and a humbling experience to have served as your 61st president.

Sincerely,

William H. Holley Jr.