AbstractID: 9891 Title: Professional Comportment: Professional Is as Professional Does

Medical Physics is an odd specialty in the constellation of healthcare providers and allied health professionals. We hold the distinction of being the only exclusively non-physician specialty that is certified by a Medical Specialty Board in the US, consistent with our unique role as independent thinkers in the clinical decision-making and provision of care. At the same time, there has been more of an ingathering than a pathway for those entering the field, and our education and training has been, to be kind, systematically ad hoc. Many if not most of us spend our education and training years communing closely with machinery into the wee hours and spend precious little business-hour time in a clinic learning under the wing of professional role models how to act, and how to interact in the healthcare workplace. We largely enter practice with nowhere near adequate preparation or "people skills" to take on the leadership role that our work demands.

Sometimes we act badly.

In this session we will explore several aspects of what it means to comport oneself professionally. Certainly it means to do one’s technical work independently with a degree of craftsmanship and skill, cognizant of the impact that each decision has on patients who rely on our services. It means treating our colleagues and co-workers with respect, no doubt. But beyond that, the perception of an individual as a professional – and by extension, of Medical Physics as a profession rather than a trade - hinges on those nebulous-seeming skills of leadership and sagacity that seem to be the very antithesis of the analytic skills we learned in school.

Respect in the workplace as a professional is not an object that comes wrapped in a diploma or certificate, nor is it the least bit determined by Medicare reimbursement policy. Professional stature is something that we each build or fail to build for ourselves every day by the way we act toward other people. Professionalism is political, not analytical.

We’ve assembled a distinguished panel to speak to the topic of professional comportment from a variety of perspectives and will be providing ample time for questions and comments from the audience.

James Purdy, PhD is Professor and Vice Chair in the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of California, Davis Medical Center, where he has been since 2004. Prior to that he spent 31 years at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis where he rose to the rank of Professor and served as both Director of the Radiation Physics Division and Associate Director of the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology's Radiation Oncology Center. Dr. Purdy is a Fellow of the AAPM, ACMP, and ACR, and was one of the inaugural group selected to become an ASTRO Fellow in 2006. He was recipient of the 1996 ACMP Marvin M.D. Williams Professional Achievement Award and the 1997 AAPM William D. Coolidge Award. He was awarded the 2000 ASTRO Gold Medal and the 2002 ACR Gold Medal. He will share with us some about his long professional experience working effectively as a Medical Physicist within the medical establishment.

Peggy Landrum, PhD, RN is Associate Clinical Professor in College of Nursing at Texas Woman's University where she participates in the training of health care professionals. She is, among other distinctions, a trainer in a technique called "Motivational Interviewing" (MI) which is a formal approach to working with people to resolve their
ambivalence about making behavioral changes that they know are good for them but they resist nonetheless. MI is a useful technique for providers in many healthcare settings such as psychotherapy, substance abuse therapy, medical management compliance, etc. and can also have a role in the workplace as a tool of change agency.

Sam Keen, PhD, ThM is a freelance thinker, lecturer, seminar leader, consultant, and author. His career has included decades in academia teaching Philosophy and Religion, as well as 20 years as a Contributing Editor of *Psychology Today*. He is distinguished by having been a sage of the "Men's Movement" who brought a great deal of value to that moment's zeitgeist without making it a career. His work is about asking the questions, and he is pleased to note that he has been an amateur at everything he has done professionally. He has taken some interest over time in the question of what it means to be "professional," particularly in healthcare. That in addition to the constant question of what it means to live a human life fully.

George W. Sherouse, PhD, is President and Chief Medical Physicist of Sherouse Systems, Inc., a North Carolina based boutique Medical Physics service company. He is a popular lecturer and contributor to the public discourse, speaking frequently on the important distinction between "gadfly" and "curmudgeon." He strives to comport himself professionally and has learned much from many failures.