

Proud to be a pharmacist

From the office that American pharmacy has built for the chief executive officer of its national professional society, the expanse of the National Mall lays out like a blanket. The hills of Arlington and the Lincoln Memorial are to the right, the 555-foot Washington Monument and the dome of the Jefferson Memorial are in the middle, and at the far end of the Mall, the beautiful dome of the Capitol rises in front of the Supreme Court building and Library of Congress. It is truly an awe-inspiring privilege just to stand there and look out the windows at the southeast corner of our new APhA headquarters building on Constitution Avenue.



Thomas E. Menighan, BPharm, MBA
Executive Vice President and CEO

A privilege to serve is the sentiment that describes my emotions as I take the reins this month as CEO and Executive Vice President of APhA. My roots in the Ohio River town of Sistersville, WV, embedded a strong set of values but also much humility. I still have to remind myself each morning that my new position is a reality and that APhA as an organization is in an enviable leadership position to inspire the four generations of pharmacists and student pharmacists in our membership, engage policy makers and other health professionals about the unique capabilities of our profession, and influence the direction that pharmacy and, indeed, our health system will go at this generational opportunity in American history.

Of course, the new home of American pharmacy is only the most tangible example of the legacy of my predecessor, John A. Gans, PharmD. From his earliest days as a student pharmacist and resident, Dr. Gans toiled to ensure that pharmacists have the autonomy, authority, and accountability needed to improve medication use and advance patient care. From my fortuitous position on the APhA staff when Dr. Gans joined the staff in 1989, I saw him quickly grasp the situation our profession was in and formulate both short- and long-term strategies to address weaknesses and threats and to take advantage of pharmacy's strengths and opportunities. Later, as APhA President, I saw the foundation he had built, and I shared his vision for the future. Because of his efforts, we are in an enviable position today as respected members of an elite Washington nonprofit association community, opinion leaders in health care, and engaged contributors to policy-making discussions with legislative and regulatory decision makers in our federal government. On behalf of APhA members and the rest of our pharmacy profession, I personally thank Dr. Gans for his four decades of service to our profession, for positioning us so well for the future, and, most of all, for his lifelong commitment to advancing patient care. Clearly, the contributions of John Gans will continue, and I look forward to working with him in the coming years to make our shared vision a reality.

Our profession is a storied one, and we have survived by adapting to changing environments. We are doing so once again, as trends converge to create opportunities as well as threats for pharmacy. I know now that the humility embodied in many of us as pharmacists must not keep us from advocating the value of our services and their importance as an essential component in improved patient care. I pledge to transform my sense of awe into untiring efforts directed toward giving you the needed tools for improving medication use and advancing patient care.

Thomas E. Menighan