A passing of the gavel: farewell & thanks

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As of 31 December 2010 I say farewell to my editorship of the *International Urogynecology Journal* and pass the reins into the very capable hands of Peter Dwyer and Paul Riss. With all sincerity I can confidently say that serving as editor of this great journal will always represent to me one of the highpoints of my professional and academic career. I have tried to be fair, thoughtful, and expedient, and for the most part feel I have served the journal well. This position has allowed me the opportunity to get to know and work with a remarkable group of international Editors, Editorial Board members, the IUGA membership, and pelvic floor specialists at large from around the world. I want to personally thank Peter Dwyer, Bob Freeman, Gunnar Lose, Paolo Palma, Paul Riss, Diaa Rizk, and Steve Swift and let them know how much I have enjoyed the camaraderie, working relationships, and friendships that have developed. With my departure I am also happy to announce that Chris Maher and Rebecca Rogers have been selected as two new editors that will join the current group.

It is not uncommon, and has indeed become customary, for departing editors to provide a brief report that summarizes the progress of the journal during their tenure. Because I am inclined to follow such a tradition, I sat down on a picturesque fall afternoon in Cincinnati and tried to summarize the growth and success of the journal over the past 7 years. The journal's impact factor in 2004 was 1.510. We have seen a steady rise in impact factor over a 5-year period to 2.412 in 2009, with a 5-year impact factor of 2.447. This is quite remarkable given that we went from 6

issues per year to 12 issues per year in 2007. It is hard to imagine that when I became the editor in 2003 that we were still operating on paper and didn't go online until January of 2005. The number of annual submissions has increased at a remarkable pace. We had 231 submissions in 2004, 830 submissions in 2009, and close to 1000 submissions in 2010. The journal has truly maintained an international presence with submissions coming from 43 different countries over the past 12 months. Based on the citation index and impact factor the journal is ranked 15th out of 70 journals in the category of Obstetrics & Gynecology and 26th out of 63 journals in the category of Urology & Nephrology. With the growth and success of the journal the peer review process has become significantly more stringent, allowing us to publish articles of ever-higher academic caliber. The rejection rate in 2004 was in the range of 26%, and our current rejection rate is running at about 52%. We have had the opportunity to publish numerous supplements, two terminology reports that were jointly put together by the IUGA and ICS terminology committees (the second of which is in this issue of the journal), and a number of thought-provoking clinical opinions and point-counterpoint discussions on a variety of controversial topics. I must reiterate that I have been extremely blessed to have an excellent team of editors and editorial board members that have facilitated this tremendous growth and success.

As is always the case in such situations, there are certain people behind the scenes who do yeoman's work to always keep the show running smoothly. I have been very lucky to have had Judy Sheridan as my editorial assistant since I took over as editor-in-chief. I can honestly say that without Judy's attention to detail and the daily needs of the journal we could not have experienced the progressive growth and success that we have seen. While Judy will certainly be missed, the journal

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office is being moved to the IUGA offices in Florida and I am sure it will continue to run smoothly under the auspices of the new editorial assistant, Elektra McDermott.

The privilege of editing a subspecialty journal such as this is afforded to only a few and represented the opportunity of a lifetime for my professional career. For this I must thank Don Ostergard for providing me this opportunity in 2003. With that said, there is considerable

personal sacrifice due to an enormous and continuing demand on one's time, and I quickly understood that the sacrifice was far from mine alone. Thus to my family and especially to my wife Mona I express my most sincere gratitude for her support, understanding, and tolerance.

As I move into the role of an Honorary Editor I am confident that the journal will continue to flourish under the new leadership.