Hello . . . I Must Be Going

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I am happy to report that my nomination of Professor F. Richard Ferraro is now confirmed by Springer Publishing, effective January 1, 2014. Richard (Ric) has an impressive future ahead of him, even at his young age, no doubt due to the very impressive foundation he has established for himself over the past 21 years at the University of North Dakota (UND). A professor of psychology, Richard is the Chester Fritz Distinguished Professor at UND, Director of the General/Experimental PhD Program (2003–2013), and Fellow of the National Academy of Neuropsychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

When I asked Richard where UND was geographically he responded, “Did you see the movie “Fargo?” Of course I did, it was one of my favorites, as are all of the Coen Brothers’ movies. Land of the frozen Vikings. No, wait a minute, that’s Minnesota! ... Badlands, that’s the ticket. I drove through there once, many years ago. The Badlands of North Dakota ... mysterious, austere. Not where you want to be alone and lost in the dead of winter.

I spoke with Richard on several occasions, having gotten to know him from at least three manuscripts he submitted for publication consideration over the years. I’m happy to say that we published all three. Add those to the 230 publications and over 290 presentations in the research interest areas listed above and you have what I call a full plate.

Richard teaches Intro Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Neuropsychology, Advanced Developmental Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Neuropsychology, Advanced Developmental Psychology, Adulthood and Aging, and Orientation to the Psychology Major. He has served as Director of the General/Experimental PhD Program, and as Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of General Psychology*, *Journal of Psychology*, and now will serve on the *American Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease and Other Dementias*, *Psychological Record*, *Psi Chi Journal of Undergraduate Research*, *Journal of Aging Research*, and the *Psi Chi Journal*.

With apologies to Groucho Marx

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Needless to say, Richard has a very impressive background, one that more than qualifies him for the job of Editor-in-Chief of *Current Psychology*. How does he describe himself? His hobbies include gardening, reading and traveling. He has been married for fourteen years to his wife Jacqueline, who knows five different languages. He is a devoted cat lover (he has two, one died last year). In addition to gardening and traveling, he enjoys riding his bike.

I liked the manuscripts by Richard that we published, I've enjoyed our exchanges by email and over the phone, and I like that he's from North Dakota.

I wrote to two friends and colleagues of Richard's. Here is what I got back:

This first letter is from Dave Balota. Richard did his post doc with Dr. Balota at Washington University in St. Louis:

"Dr. Ferraro is a very thoughtful, and fair individual. Importantly, he has considerable breadth of knowledge of the field, and appreciation of different approaches within psychology. He is dedicated and conscientious. I have no doubt the *Journal* will continue to be in good hands during the upcoming years under his leadership. Best wishes and thanks for your important service to the field. Cheers, Dave"

George Kellas, at the University of Kansas was Ric's PhD mentor. He wrote the following:

Dear Jeff,

I've been out of town for a few days and failed to check my e-mail. Hope I'm not too tardy.

"... Ric Ferraro was a student of mine throughout his tenure as a graduate student at the University of Kansas." During this period, Ric was outstanding in his dedication to research, and his work ethic. He was easily the hardest working student I have ever had the pleasure of mentoring. I believe he spent more time in the laboratory than anywhere else. As a research assistant he was reliable, punctual, insightful and capable of carrying a very heavy load of professional responsibilities. As an aside, Ric was the only student I have ever known who was able to SAVE money with a normal graduate stipend. It's fair to add that we became close friends as well as colleagues during this time. Following graduation, Ric accepted a post-doctoral fellowship at Washington University where we were able to continue our related interests while he was engaged in other research with Professor David Balota. This is a hallmark of Ric—his ability to do many things simultaneously and all equally well. I have no doubt but that characteristic will continue in the future even with his new responsibilities.

Jeff, I don't think I've done justice to Ric here, but I think you may be able to extract something that will guide your comments concerning your handing the baton to Ric.

George Kellas
Professor Emeritus of Psychology
University of Kansas

My close friend and late colleague Thomas S. Szasz, MD, and I had our own rating system for people we considered "top of the line," ethically and intellectually. We'd say, "he's a good guy." Tom is no longer here to echo my sentiments, but I'm sure that despite our clear differences regarding the meaning of mental illness and its treatment, Richard is, in our book, a good guy. Thus, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, Richard Ferraro, our next Editor-in-

Chief of *Current Psychology*. I know the journal will continue to grow exponentially.

I have mixed feelings about saying goodbye to you as Editor-in-Chief of *Current Psychology*. The late sociologist Irving Louis Horowitz asked me to take over *Current Psychology* over eight years ago. I received no help from my university with regard to publishing this journal. ILH, as he liked to sign his name, was one of the greatest sociologists in the world, and I was immensely flattered by his request. Many people knew him as someone to be feared. I knew him as a kind friend, a colleague, and a mentor. Long a close colleague and friend of the late psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, ILH and I shared a mutual respect and admiration for Tom. Tom was another intellectual giant, a person far ahead of his time. ILH asked me to take over as Editor-in-Chief of *Current Psychology* because he wanted a journal that could serve as an outlet for perspectives that did not view behavior as a disease. ILH knew I had taught thousands of students at American University, Hopkins, and other schools including graduate programs in clinical psychology, and while I was not, like Tom was not, an “anti-psychiatrist,” I shared his opposition to the insanity defense and involuntary commitment. I believe in psychology and psychiatry between consenting adults, as Tom used to say.

I had several rules as Editor-in-Chief, which Richard may or may not continue. He is obviously free to do as he chooses. That is what ILH told me, and I’m passing along the message. I would not publish any articles that used mental illness as a variable, and I would not publish any articles that supported the insanity defense, involuntary commitment, coercion in the name of treatment, proposed new categories for the DSM, and used the meaningless term “gender” in place of biological sex difference just to be politically correct. These conditions had no adverse effect on the number of manuscripts submitted, quite to the contrary. Submissions were overwhelming. I also insisted on publishing articles that had some practical value, some way of changing the world. Too many articles I had seen published were excellent from a quantitative and statistical point of view, but simply seemed to make no difference when it came to changing the world. I place a very high value on abiding by ethical standards when it comes to being a psychotherapist. I’ve called myself a psychoanalyst, not because I consider myself Freudian, but because of all the terms used to describe the work, analyzing and making sense out of a person’s behavior seemed to be what people wanted most of all. They wanted some way to reduce the pain and suffering that comes with being a human being.

ILH said I could do whatever I wanted as Editor-in Chief—I relay the exact same sentiments to Richard. I suspect he and I are different in some important ways, ways in which we see psychology as a practical tool. I see the mind and brain as different from one another. In fact, I believe there is no such thing as the mind. I’ve always taken an existential approach to understanding, explaining and predicting behavior. Behavior has reasons, things are caused.

I’ve been very fortunate in my life. I’m 62 now, I’ve had the honor of knowing some of the greatest social scientists that have walked the face of the earth: Morris Chafetz, Herbert Fingarette, William Groman, Amos Gunsberg, Irving Louis Horowitz, Peter Singer, Thomas Szasz, and so many others I know I’ve forgotten to mention. No one is perfect. I’ve been lucky, and I am grateful. I remain a fallible human being, as Bill Tucker will attest.

I would especially like to thank the following people at Springer for their confidence and trust: Mr. Bill Tucker, Director of the Behavioral Sciences Division; Ms. Welmoed Spahr, Senior Editor, Social and Behavioral Sciences; and Ms. Jona Rose Y. de los Nieves in production.

Leading us all through this journal has been a wonderful and meaningful experience for me. Unfortunately, I've had my share of terrible pain: My wife of 37 years dropped dead suddenly and without any warning 2.5 years ago. My mother died holding my hand and my brother's hand. Too many close friends all seemed to die within weeks of one another. It was very strange. It was very painful. And for eight years, since I was appointed Editor-in-Chief, I've struggled with chronic spine pain caused by "failed spine surgery." If you're ever considering spine surgery, write me a note. Be careful. Once certain tissues are cut you can't glue them back together again.

I appreciate the support I received from so many interesting and wise people. I am thankful to those who helped as peer reviewers, and I deeply appreciate the friends and colleagues, not to mention students, clients, patients if you will, who stood by me during the past eight years that my academic institution not only abandoned me, but attempted to undermine my work because of different philosophies regarding the nature of behavior and moral agency. So let it be written, so let it be done! As a result of these rich eight years. I am very happy to leave *Current Psychology* in good hands, Richard Ferraro's good hands, and I hope you will treasure the good work I know that Richard will do as he carries on in his own unique and creative ways.

Jeffrey A. Schaler
Editor-in-Chief
October 17, 2013