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ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES (AUCD)

INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION

MOVING FROM GOOD IDEAS TO GREAT OUTCOMES

RENAISSANCE HOTEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.

NOVEMBER 17, 2013

RETIREMENT ROAST FOR GEORGE JESIEN

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[INFO@ACSCAPTIONS.COM](mailto:INFO@ACSCAPTIONS.COM)

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(Music continuing to play)

>> JULIE FODOR: This is a very exciting event. And we have dinner ready to be served. So we have a couple of surprises before we do that. So we invite you to please sit down.

(music is continuing to play)

>> JULIE FODOR: Okay. We're going to get started. So like all good classrooms, we're going to lower our voices, and we're going to visit with our neighbors after we're done (Laughter).

We're cutting you off a little bit, yeah. A little bit louder? Okay! Where is George? I see him! Remember when you thought this would be 18 people?

(Laughter)

Good evening, everyone! I'm told I need to talk a little bit louder. Good evening, and welcome! My name is Julie Fodor. I am the current President of the Association of University Centers of Disabilities for a couple of more days, and I am the director of the Center on Disabilities and Human Development at the University of Idaho. Thank you for being here tonight to celebrate, roast, and honor our dear friend, mentor, and really I have to say amazing colleague, George. You are supposed to be listening, George!

(Laughter) it is true that you are irreplaceable. I have to tell you that. And I want to thank you personally as I know we all do for all that you have done and will do for this network. And more importantly for people with disabilities and their families. So thank you!

(Applause).

We do have a special surprise for you tonight. One among several, I think (Laughter).

So if the Board would join me in front of George's table? Thank you! (Singing) fly me to the moon.

¶ let me play among the stars.

¶ let me see what spring is like on Jupiter and Mars.

¶ in other words, hold my hand.

¶ in other words, Georgie.

¶ fill my heart with song and let me sing forever more.

¶ you are what I long for, all I worship and adore.

¶ in other words, please be true.

¶ in other words, we love you.

¶

>> At this point we invite everyone to join in on the third verse which is the same as the second verse. The words will come up in just a moment. And I am filling time until we get around to the next 8 bars.

>> Following the bouncing ball!

¶ in other words ‑‑

>> Oops, too soon! Follow the bouncing ball!

¶ fill my heart with song.

¶ and let me sing forever more.

¶ you are all I long for.

¶ all I worship.

¶ and adore.

¶ in other words.

¶ please be true.

¶ in other words, in other words, we love you.

¶

(Cheers and applause).

>> JULIE FODOR: I really can't believe we did that! Before we get going on dinner, that was really special, wasn't it? You should have heard the song that we were going to sing, "Fly Me ‑‑ no, it was something else by Ella Fitzgerald. But we decided that we wouldn't do well on that song.

Okay. Crystal is telling me that I have to speak louder still? Louder? Louder? Really? Oh, there is a microphone so you should be able to hear me! I just want to take a couple of minutes to introduce the program of this evening. It's never a hard task to do something special for somebody that you care about and value. And, George, obviously there are a few, but there are many people who value you. So you can just give me your attention for just one minute. I know that there's lots to talk about, and I know that there's lots of fun to be had. But just one minute because I really would like to thank those who put this event together. Their time and energy, their creativity to honor and laugh and celebrate with George. Please join me in thanking Andy Bacon.

(Cheers and applause).

Bob Bacon.

(Cheers and applause).

Leslie Cohen, our President‑Elect.

(Applause).

Celia Feinstein.

(Applause)

Amy Sharp.

(Applause)

And, of course, Crystal Pariseau and Laura Martin.

(Cheers and applause)

They've been working on this for months and months. As soon as George started talking about retirement to the Board last February, this plan went into motion, and it went into motion in a very clever way. So I mow that George was a little worried about this event. He actually said, "You know, there might be 18 of us at the table. So we could just fill one table."

I think that there are over 400 folks here tonight to welcome George.

(Applause).

Or to celebrate George! Of course, this event would not be possible without the generous support of numerous centers from our network around the country that purchased tables and provided other support. So thank you. They are listed in your program at your seats, and, of course, each of you supported the network by being here tonight and supported the celebration. So thank you. We will dine next. Enjoy each other. Enjoy company. And then at 7:50, the part that you are all waiting for, the roast will begin. Thank you. Enjoy your meal!

>> Good evening! I'm just here to give you the two‑minute warning. That's two‑minute warning to George. No! But we're going to start the program in a couple of minutes!

(the program will begin shortly).

(Cheers and applause).

>> ANDY: Good evening. I am Andy Bacon from New York.

>> BOB: And I am Bob Bacon. And we are your hosts for tonight!

(Cheers and applause).

(Laughter).

>> Why do you think they asked us to host the roast tonight?

>> Well, maybe because with the last name like Bacon they figured we had to have a sense of humor (Laughter).

And like they say, is everything better with bacon!

(Laughter).

>> Well, it seems like a lot of people have a sense of humor about Bacon these days. There is even a national bacon day in August.

>> And you have seen the line of bacon items? Bacon mouse pads, and bacon aprons, and bacon shirts.

>> Whoa! Nice tie and cumber‑bun. And your bacon shawl. And your bacon earrings!

(Laughter).

>> Seriously. We're so honored to play a role in George's retirement party. All of us in the AUCD network, we have just been in awe of George's skill and talent in leading this network. Because of his vision, his creativity, his passion, his integrity, and his strategic leadership, we have accomplished so much together. We are just proud of AUCD and just in awe of its accomplishments. Thanks in large part to George! Now, in this network, we all like to laugh a lot. And George is no exception. He loves to laugh! So we promised him tonight there would and lot of laughs. But what we didn't tell was that most of them would be at his expense!

(Laughter).

And he has given us so much material to live by (Laughter).

And you will hear about a lot of it tonight from our roasters. But, George, you know, I do want you to know that we put limits on our roasters. We wanted to keep it tasteful. And within professional boundaries. So we were very, very clear. We had guidelines. I mean, we told the roasters, no embarrassing childhood pictures, like this one!

(Laughter).

(Applause).

>> And we said no matter what, no embarrassing videos! Like this one!

(Laughter).

(Applause).

¶

(Applause).

>> Thanks for that really important reminder about limits (Laughter).

And I am at least, hmmm, 5, 10% sure that everybody is going to follow them. And speaking of trying to follow them, I'm so glad that I have the chance to start tonight by sharing something about George that he has somehow managed to keep secret all of these years. I think a lot of people in this room have always wondered if George is an ordinary mortal (Laughter).

I mean, look at his ability to work long and hard multi‑tasking on so many complex and difficult topics at the same time. Oops!

(Laughter)

Leaping over policy barriers in a single bound (Laughter).

Linking us together in an amazingly strong network web. And e‑mailing and tweeting almost 24 hours a day. Utilizing 4, 5, 6 different devices all at the same time. You know, I wish you could see what's in this bag. You know, I actually frisked George earlier in the evening while he was talking to, I'm not sure who it was. I mean, no surprise that he would have an iPad® on him. But a mini iPad®, too? And he had, let's see, let's see, well, iPhone®, of course. And he had two other cell phones. And then he actually had, let's see, a copy of ‑‑

(Laughter).

Now this is modern geek magazine for some of you who ‑‑ I know, probably some of you subscribe to it.

(Laughter)

But those of you around the network who saw the Flat Georges with arms raised, that picture was snapped because he was named modern geek 2013 modern geek person of the year. And I don't know if you see on the slide, but he authored a couple of important feature articles in this edition. One was how to stay ahead of your colleagues in the technology race. And the other one was coping with technology envy (Laughter).

But speaking of technology, you and I did decide to dress similarly tonight with the Bacon theme. But how could we have forgotten our hats?

>> Oh, our hat!

(Laughter).

>> Oh, oh, thank you!

(Laughter).

(Applause).

>> He's laughing. Listen, he is laughing, but look at how envious he is (Laughter).

And for crying out loud, he just wrote that article about coping with technology envy (Laughter).

He can't practice what he is preaching!

(Laughter).

But now I know I just said that the reason that I frisked George was because I wanted him to be able to focus on the roasters. I mean, actually I forgot to say that. I'm saying it now!

(Laughter).

And now I'm going to tell you I didn't really mean that. Because actually these hats replace all of that other technology. I mean, that I pulled out, that I frisked off of him earlier. And so, George, we do have one for you, too.

(Laughter).

And you do have to wear this all roast long (Laughter).

(Applause).

Okay (Laughter).

Well actually, I can read his thoughts!

(Laughter).

That's exactly what he was just ‑‑ no. Actually, it wasn't what he was saying. No. Okay. Laughter is ‑‑

(Laughter).

Okay. Laughter is great. But now it's time to get a bit more serious, but just a bit (Laughter).

You know that ‑‑ actually, it's better than I thought it would. So you know that one characteristic of super heros is that they have a secret identity, right? And so secret identities and technology got me thinking about just where George might have really come from.

(Laughter)

And so I did a little genealogical research. And I went back in time the way you that normally do and then it hit me! George's fascination with technology was the clue that made me realize that I was looking in the wrong direction. George didn't come from the past. He came from the future! And he has been hiding in plain sight all along. And now that he has retired, he can finally tell the truth, that his name is jot George Jesien ‑‑ (Jetson theme).

¶ meet George Jetson.

¶

>> Maybe this slide will make it a little clearer.

(Laughter)

We've got the AUCD logo on the shirt, and lots of technology on the belt. So anyway, so now you all know the truth. And that's why we will say repeatedly throughout this evening George, you really are out of this world!

(Cheers and applause).

>> So, George, your sense of humor may be tested tonight. Maybe it already has been!

(Laughter)

But just remember, you know, despite the funny insults, the outlandish stories, true and untrue, it is a great honor to be roasted. We're only making fun of you because we love you and respect you. Really, George, really! Just remember that. It's going to help you!

(Laughter)

So with that, let's get on with the roast, and our first roaster is Terry Dolan, a long time friend and colleague of George's. Terry?

(Cheers and applause).

>> TERRY DOLAN: You know, there is an old adage, George, that you know how much they love you when they have the retirement party either before you leave or after you leave (Laughter).

So you should be honored that they're doing this while you are still here (Laughter).

The other thing is that I was told by the host that you had to limit your remarks to 5 minutes. They went actually 12 (Laughter).

So those of that have baby‑sitters, that have a midnight, you might want to make a call right now (Laughter).

Actually, I was director of the Weisman Center for 20‑some years in Wisconsin. But George actually preceding me at the Center in the '70s. George was a trainee at the Weisman Center, and I didn't go there until 1982. And I hadn't even heard of George at that time. By then he had gone to a little town north of Madison that has canoes, oh Portage. He went to Portage. And about 1985, some of my staff came to me and said that they were spending too much time developing neurosciences when we really had to get back to some behavioral things. And they wanted me to recruit someone in the general area of early intervention. And they were recommending a young man by the name of George Jesien who had been a trainee. And they liked him. They thought this he was ingenious and hard working, and blah, blah, blah. So I said, well, go ahead and invite him in for an interview. And what showed up at my door is showing on the slide there.

(Laughter) and I thought, my God! What, is he cold?

(Laughter).

And I interviewed him. And in truth, I was impressed by him. But I told him, "Why don't you come back some time in the future when you are a little older and let's talk about this."

(Laughter)

So in truth, it wasn't more than a month or so later this individual showed up at my door (Laughter).

And, again, I was impressed with his ingenuity and drive and blah, blah, blah. So I ended up offering him a job. And I must say that unbeknownst to me that was really the start of his career that ended up in this chair right here. So I am not sure how proud I am of that.

(Laughter)

So anyway, he was doing a great job. And in those days I was spending a lot of time fundraising. We had decided to add a 70,000 square foot building to the Weisman Center, and I was spending a lot of time trying to get money from the private sector. And George came into my office one day and said, "You know, I'd like to help. I think that I could be good at that."

"Great, that's excellent."

I said, "Why don't you go out and give it a way. Try try.

Well, my God, every weekend he would come back in Monday morning with satchels full of money. I couldn't figure out what in the hell he was doing. He was doing it a lot better than I was doing it! So I had someone on the staff go out and hide near his home (Laughter).

And try and see when he came in on Sunday evening what the hell he was doing. And so the next slide shows what he was doing.

(Laughter)

And it happens to be a ‑‑ well, then I knew what he was doing. And I had to say that we raised the 20 million, and never once did George go to prison. At least not that I know of (Laughter).

I would see George regularly, particularly when he was interested in bettering himself maybe in a different position or something. And he, as you know, he ended up going to the Kennedy Foundation as a Fellow with Harkins' Committee whatever that was. And then he came back and he was at the center another 3‑4 years. And he came in one day and he said, "I want to apply for a job as executive director at the Kennedy Foundation."

So we talked a lot about how he might go about that. And at that time Al Healey, and I were spending time with you and Mrs. Shriver, and we thought that we could help prepare him for the interview. And one thing that we recommended is how he should dress. And the next slide shows how we recommended that he dress.

(Laughter)

(Applause)

Now, for those of you that ‑‑

(Laughter).

Can you see the slide?

For those of you that don't know this, George actually started out in high school in the seminary. And he was doing great. He liked it until one day he heard about this word that he had never heard before called celibacy (Laughter).

Well, that ended George's career in the seminary (Laughter).

But I have to say that our strategy was, I mean, we knew that Mrs. Shriver really liked, you know, young Catholic boys. I mean, she hired Al to do a lot of things. She liked ‑‑ she hired me a do a lot of things. And Steve Eidelman, she hired Steve Eidelman. And, Steve, that's a joke!

(Laughter) and you all know now here he is retiring. And my only concern about him is what is he going to do in retirement? He is such a driven person. He is going to need something. And I don't know if any of you know Greg Lamond, but he was probably the greatest American biker that didn't take drugs ever (Laughter).

But he was on the ‑‑ the Best Buddies organization on the Board me for a long time. I talked with him recently and he said I shouldn't worry about George because he was actually in training to maybe get into competitive biking. And that that would really keep him ‑‑ so the next slide shows him in training.

(Laughter)

So in ending, I really have to say that ‑‑

(Laughter).

I've known George for, what, 35 years. I loved him the day that I met him. And I still love him. And I hope that George and Pam have a great ‑‑ I still have two file cabinet drawers full of reference letters if you need any. Thank you!

(Laughter).

(Applause).

>> Sit down!

(Laughter).

>> I a football game I want to watch!

(Laughter).

>> STEVE: My name is Steven, and I am a recovering UCEDD trainee (Laughter).

I was told by the Bacon twins you can say whatever you want, but no profanity. Those of you who know me know how damn hard that will be. I greatly admire and respect George. Nothing that I say from now on will reflect that (Laughter).

The first time I bumped into this guy we were looking to do things in rural areas. I asked him some things in a conference. And he was the big cheese, and he save me sage advice. He said take our project. Everything will be find. So the next time I heard about George, we were interviewing for Kennedy Fellows, and Dolan picks up the phone and says we've got this guy Jesien, and he wants to come to Washington. Does he know it's not rural?

(Laughter).

And so he came in for his interview. And so there are several Kennedy Fellows in the audience, the Bacon twins and a few others. And the advice that we always gave them before the interviews was exactly the same. No fawning, no, the Kennedy family is this and that, no none of that stuff. George comes in and they have an interview, and each candidate gets a few minutes to give their opening remarks. And he says, I am so honored to be here. I was born in Germany to Polish parents and they emigrated, and on and on and on, and we overcame that and he did show up. And I hope that he didn't do that to Senator Harkins. So tend of his fellowship, the fellows were coming for the trustees' meetings, and was in Senator Kennedy's hideaway office. Now, George, be concise. Talk about what you've done. Don't get carried away he said, well, I was born in Germany to two ‑‑ and Senator Kennedy's head is hanging down like that he went back to Wisconsin and he said keep your eyes open. I really want to come back to Washington. I've got the bug. So about two years later, I was leading the Kennedy Foundation, and I talked to George, and he said I really want to come in for an interview. So he comes in, and we spend a half a day together. I said George you really don't want to do this. George, you really don't want to do this.

(Laughter).

So at the end of two years there, I got a phone call from George, you've got to get me out of here!

(Laughter).

So AUCD. I saved from my short time at AUCD every memo and every e‑mail, though I no longer have a program that can open floppy disks or WordPerfec, up about I did save the job ad that George responded to. It says, non‑profit trade association representing Universities seeking new executive director. Must have skills following areas, one, negotiations with the FBI.

(Laughter)

Two, non‑profit bankruptcy law (Laughter).

And, three, extradition from other states.

(Laughter)

And then there was some other characteristics. And apparently he was ‑‑ so we went ‑‑ AUCD was sort of broke at the time. And they interviewed everybody preliminarily. And then they were so broke that we had to go to a third world country to have the final interview so we were in New Orleans.

(Laughter)

And my son lived there. It's a third world country. Believe me!

(Laughter)

And we were so broke again that George and I had to share a room the night before interview. Now, Pam, I don't know how you've done that.

(Laughter)

All of these years. But, I mean, the room vibrated he snored so loudly! It was unbelievable. I mean, it was I finally had to go and sleep in the bathtub!

(Laughter)

So, let's see, I think that there are two more things. So they offered George the job. And the negotiations went back and forth. And Gwenn Clark who is the longest living AUCD employee comes up to me and says what's this guy like? And I am like, well, he is from Wisconsin.

(Laughter)

I'm sorry to the people here from Wisconsin.

(Laughter)

But it's all going to be okay, and I think that you will all agree that he has exceeded anybody's expectations of what was humanly possible in that job. And I am proud to call you friend.

(Cheers and applause).

>> Can I take this off? It hurts!

(Laughter)

>> Those of you who don't know me, I am Liz Weintraub, and I am the self‑advocacy specialist at AUCD. As well as very many advocate activities on my own time. I first met George when he was working for the Joseph Kennedy Foundation. One of my first favorite book series when I was little was the Curious George books.

(Laughter)

So when I was asked to give a roast to George in a proper way, I thought of those books.

(Laughter)

There were a couple of ways that George reminds me of Curious George the monkey.

(Laughter)

Of course, he would never get in trouble.

(Laughter).

Like the monkey. Like how the monkey makes friends with the man with the yellow hat. George makes friends very easily. We know that. Everyone who comes in ‑‑ who came here tonight. But Curious George, George has always encouraged me and others to have questions. You may not want to give a monkey a gadget as he might break it, or he would eat it.

(Laughter)

But give George a Twizzler, and he is a happy camper. The man with a yellow hat said to curious George now it won't be the same without you. But you taught us how to have fun while we do our work. And that's what we'll do. So let's raise a glass in honor of our friend, George.

(Cheers and applause).

>> Wonderful job, as always! I love you. Thanks!

>> Oh, boy.

(Laughter)

>> Good evening, everybody. I am sort of the sacrificial lamb for the trainees here. And in honor of being a former educator, we thought that we would provide our rendition of oh, the places you'll go, modified slightly. So congratulations, George Jesien. Today is your day! You are off to great places. You are off and away. You have retirement in your head, and a bike set to your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You will look up and down streets, look them over with care, about some you will say, that looks like Wayne Avenue over there. With your head full of freedom, and the road under your feet.

(Laughter)

Your down any time it looks like rain on the streets. Out in the world, crazy things can, and you know. It's called life, and retired people frequently do crazy and wild thing. And that's what exactly we would expect you from. Oh, the places you'll watch the trainees go. There is work to be done, there are trainees to be trained, and networks to make strong. And the magical things that you've done while you held the ball has helped to make the trainees the winningest winners of all. Oh, the impact that you've made.

(Laughter)

Don't you dare leave AUCD crying. Right now it's time for so much fun! Get a big ole glass of wine, and toast to your success and you will you've done. What the hell are you going to without something to Tweet?

(Laughter).

We're sure that your love of techie things will continue. It's in your blood. It's like food to eat. We'll hear about all of your adventures. Yes, that's what we'll do. In the wind your guns will be flip‑flapping. Once more you will buy pie, smile and ready for anything under the sky. Ready, well, because you are that kind of guy. You are about the same us a are going to be. Enjoy the limelight now. This may be the last shot.

(Laughter)

(Applause).

Training the leadership, GPS to keep tabs on us, you are crazy? Are you smoking crack?

(Laughter) you and your darn technology fuss, on you will go through the retiree land, onward and upward many and exciting creeks. You may feel the AUCD lure and maybe one we'll invite you back to speak.

(Laughter)

You will get mixed up, of course, especially with a bottle of wine, you already know. You'll get mixed up with many things birds which may be hard to imagine stranger birds than us trainees, you know. Did you succeed, George? Yes, yes, indeed. That's absolutely 100% guaranteed. George, you've moved mountains. So trainees here from LENS, UCEDDs, or IDRCs, hey, we are here to celebrate you and your day! You are off to great places, some near, some far away. Your retirement is waiting. So cheers to you, now get the hell on your way!

(Laughter).

(Applause).

>> Why aren't you home?

(Laughter).

>> Don't do it!

(Laughter)

>> Oh, boy. I have not been looking forward to this.

>> The amount of people with energy in this room is absolutely amazing tonight. The 400 and some‑odd people you that have seated in front of you are a true reflection of all of the individuals that you have touched throughout the years. That includes as we just heard from the previous speaker the number of trainees, students, and different individuals that you've mentored. You've taken a ‑‑ you've made it a priority, to look across the entire organization and to find talent. To find individuals who are diamonds in the rough. To reach out and talk to your colleagues about who is out there, and to give them a chance. If you look at some of the people who are in the room tonight, and you see where they've come and where they've gone, you have Marty Blare who was your first fellow. Who is now the director at the UCEDD in Montana. You have Lisa Lister who is a former employee and now a professor at George Mason University. Ethan, another fellow who is now a director of a school in Virginia. Sue Lynn at HRSA receiving her Ph.D. Matt, I don't know if he is in the room.

>> Yes.

>> Yay!

>> Executive director of the DD Council here in Washington. David, Morrisey, Andrew Morris, AIDD. Maggie Nygren executive director, Donna Meltzer, Chapman, executive director of an independent living center in Missouri. Sharon Lewis, ACL. That's one hell of a list!

(Applause)

And with that you taught people, you nurtured them, you provided guidance, but you also let them go. Because you knew at the end of the day that they were going to stay within the network. You made AUCD a family. And I think that there are three incidents that I would like to quickly go through that describe your commitment not only to students and mentees, but also your staff. Kim, and I don't know remember her, and Sam. When Kim had her baby, Sam is 15 now? One of the first people in the hospital and one of the individuals that made sure that she was getting the appropriate care was George. Lisa Lister, when she broke her hip on her biking accident, the first person that was in the hospital was George and talking to her parents in Oregon knowing that they were thousands of miles away. And this one you have to give me a moment. Kim on September 11th, down on the Hill, and the plane hit the Pentagon, first thing Kim did was call the office to let us all know what had happened that day. And Metro had stopped running. And she was stuck downtown. And it took four hours for cars to leave D.C. George went and drove downtown, told her walk up North Capitol Street, and I will find you. Oh, boy.

From the bottom of our hearts, all we can say is thank you. We love you very much. And you are surely be missed.

(Applause).

>> Give her a hug for me! Be kind! You know a lot!

(Laughter).

>> George, said I might know where the bodies are.

(Laughter).

So good evening. I would really like to say that I'm glad to be here, but I really do have mixed feelings.

(Laughter)

Saying farewell to George is really, really hard. And it was really hard for me to pull together some light comments, and come up with some funny stories about George and still adhere to our theme, which is, By George, he is out of this world!

(Laughter)

Why is it so hard? Well, I do actually have a lot of stories ‑‑

>> Yes, you do! But we don't have a lot of time!

(Laughter).

>> But mostly those stories are actually about your skills. And as I told George a couple of weeks ago, I don't find you particularly funny.

(Laughter)

The truly funny stories I have, actually I come off pretty badly here. But I am not going to share them.

(Laughter)

But I will do my best to comply with the theme! For those of you that know me, I struggle to comply.

(Laughter)

So with regards to the theme, I remember the first time that George and I left the confines of the Earth's atmosphere. He was driving, of course.

(Laughter)

I had called shotgun. The only real part of that story that's not true is the space part because as everyone here knows George does love to drive.

(Laughter)

There is a dashboard full of gadgets. There is that sense of movement towards a good. And a truly private place to make phone calls.

(Laughter)

For anyone that might be concerned, hands‑free, of course!

(Laughter)

And so in situations where I might just take the Metro, George drives. No matter how hard it is to find parking. I think that it's a game.

(Laughter)

For George. A personal triumph to find parking in D.C. that is close and cheap. I think that it psyched you up for meetings.

(Laughter)

A good omen because if you had that parking triumph, you know, the meeting was going to go well. So as I mentioned, I did get to call shotgun, and I thank you, George, for letting me. Just being along for the ride probably would have been enough. But I had the chance to observe and learn from the master. The pilot of the space ship, Crystal. That's the theme! And I don't know how many of you know the story about how I came to be at AUCD. Andrew Morris at that time was the policy fellow, and I was at CMS. And Andrew told me about the opening for a director of the TA Program for the UCEDDs at AUCD. And I want to tell you the story now. I think that both of us come off pretty good.

>> Oh, good!

(Laughter) go ahead!

>> I applied. I came in for the interview. And the interview lasted two hours. Which is much longer than I had expected, and the parking meter ran out. The ticket was $30. It was a long time ago, but I still remember.

(Laughter)

It still hurts! And although I didn't know it at the time, this was probably the very first lesson that I learned from George. What was lesson? I am going to give three guesses. Now, don't worry, I am going to tell you at the end what the right answer is.

(Laughter)

But the three lessons that you might just chew on, "A," be prepared to sacrifice your pawn. Nothing good comes without a price. And, "C," if the meet something going really well, don't leave!

(Laughter)

So I have this two‑hour interview. And I thought it went really well. I mean, it was two hours. $30 ticket. I'm just saying! $30!

>> All right! All right! All right!

(Laughter).

>> It was pretty thorough interview.

(Laughter)

No, no, trust me. It's okay now.

(Laughter).

I just couldn't keep bringing it up. I thought that I had a shot at the job. I even sent a thank you e‑mail. And George relied that he was interviewing other candidates but he was make a decision within two weeks. So two weeks past, and nothing. So I e‑mailed him again saying that I am interested in the job. And he sends me basically the same response. So another two weeks. I e‑mail him again. Same basic response. And now I am starting to feel like a stalker.

(Laughter)

I thought, you know, I really misread $30! That e‑mail exchange. But, no, no, no. So back and forth, back and forth. Than is going on for some time. So finally he let's me know, thank you, by the way, that I have the job. I think really that's the only time ever that I wore George down.

(Laughter)

He might disagree. But he is the roastee, and he doesn't get a rebuttal. So I think that there was a lesson here. I haven't even started yet two lessons. Another lesson, and I am going to give you three guesses, and, you know, the importance of, "A," being persistent? "B," being careful what you wish for?

(Laughter).

"C," staying on message no matter what. So why didn't George hire me right off the bat? You all know me. I'm lovely! Why?

(Laughter)

It turn outs that I had a rather basic character flaw. I failed to train within the network.

(Laughter)

George, a true believer in the value of the network, and the association being a representative of that network, really, really, really wanted to hire from the network. Luckily for me no one else applied from the network.

(Laughter)

And in retrospect, I got my third lesson from George, three guesses, as a leader, you have to be, "A," prepared to walk the walk. "B," understand what your goals really are. And don't dismiss a possible strategy too soon. And, "C," expect sometimes you just have to take a calculated risk.

So sometimes the risk pays off. Sometimes you're disappointed. I do recall one time I really did disappoint George on an almost visceral level. And to this day, I still don't understand why it was so disappointing. It wasn't a research policy or practice issue. It was sports. I am really completely oblivious to what's happened most of the time in the world of sporting events. I failed spectacularly each year in March Madness. But I think that was a relatively minor disappointment to George. But there was one time when it dawned on him that I did not know what the Big 10 was.

(Laughter)

Or why it might be important to know that.

(Laughter)

Appalled is a pretty strong word.

(Laughter)

but that's pretty much how he was. So just for you, George, I have learned the follow things. Even though it is called the Big 10, there are 12.

(Laughter)

Not 10 colleges in the Big 10. And this term is used for 26 different sports that have 12 colleges. And just for you, I promise to work this information into at least three conversations this week.

(Laughter)

And show some interest in what others have to say.

(Laughter)

Thanks to you and your influence, I would like to think that I had some influence, too.

(Cheers and applause).

You know, I like your hat. But I think that it's Windows 8!

(Laughter).

And as an early adopter, I am going to lit work out the bugs. So I do want to tell you one story actually about George. It's an office story the first time that these hats were worn in public.

(Laughter)

So you all know these hats are presented to the data coordinators. But AUCD got these hats in the office just before the AUCD staff summer retreat one year. And George would ensure just as background that at least twice a year there was a one‑day staff retreat. Part of it would be strategic and actual work. The rest of it would be a team‑building activity. So for this retreat the team‑building activity was, and I'm sorry, George, but enough people told me that I had to tell the story. It was a Segway tour of D.C. the staff as outfitted in our matching AUCD polos and our hats. So I am just going to take it down because it will fall off. But I will say that I do love the flare. So we all go down to the tour shop where we are instructed on how to ride the Segways. Y'all know what a Segway is? Okay, good. So the guy who tells us how to ride the Segways, he also gives us a safety lecture. And the number one thing that we're told to remember is that the wheels of the Segway turn independently. Okay? So it's really, really important that you keep your wheels on the same kind of surface.

(Laughter)

so if you are on the sidewalk, those wheels should be on the sidewalk. If you want to go on the grass, the wheels should go on the grass simultaneously, otherwise the wheels start to turn at different speeds and the Segway will start to buck like a Bronco! And it will literally buck you right off. So, okay, I've shared that with you. The guy shared it with us. And then we watch a safety video. It says the same thing. And then we're presented with the release.

(Laughter)

It says the same thing.

(Laughter)

We all sign the release.

(Laughter)

So we begin our tour, and I remember we're all dressed in our matching polos and hats, and the helmets, and we look like some sort of AUCD paramilitary corps. And we're touring D.C., and after about 30 minutes some people in the group have become so confident on their Segways that they're hitting the upper speed limits, and they're racing, and people on the sidewalk are diving out of the way.

(Laughter)

And George is having a great time. He is actually mastered the Segway. And he starts hot dogging. Unfortunately, in the course of the hot dogging, manages to get one wheel on the grass, one wheel on the sidewalk, and the next thing you know he is on the sidewalk.

(Laughter)

So he is hurt. He is hurt pretty badly. But he was determined to hide it as much as possible. The tour company is now certified.

(Laughter)

They think that they're going to sue him. Even though he has signed the release. They really want him to go to the hospital. And I don't know what you said to them, but he somehow got them to get his car for him. Remember, he use Metro. He drove. Out of the garage and drive it to him where he was. Because he was going nowhere on the sidewalk. And then he drove himself to the hospital. Okay. It's a miracle that he managed to get to the hospital without passing out. But once he gets to the emergency room parking lot, realizes there is no way he can get out of the car and into the ER. So he starts honking.

(Laughter).

Okay. Now, apparently in D.C. there are enough people who manage to drive themselves to the ER and find that they cannot get out of the car. So when people start honking, they just send him out with a gurney!

(Laughter) they don't even check! So, okay, all's well that ends well, and George was fine, and we have the story. But there is a lesson here!

(Laughter).

>> Three lessons?

>> There are probably a lot of lessons. But I am going to take from this event, I am just going to tell you that I think that the important lesson from this is that you should be a lifelong learner.

(Laughter)

you should try new things! You should learn new skills. You should learn from the examples of others.

(Laughter)

And you should take the safety warning seriously!

(Laughter).

So in the years that I spent with George, I learned so many things. I told you that I may or may not know where some of the bodies are buried, but what I learned from George is something called strategic silence. And if I employ your strategic silence, you'll never know. If I am just waiting for the most strategic time to spill or no but I will cultivate that heir of mystery that you have obtained. But in the spirit of keeping mum, I want to focus on the past, and I want to focus on the future. George, I want to thank you for all of the advice that you've given me all over the years. I would like to give some advice for the future. Because, yes, who better to give someone advice about retirement than someone who has not retired!

(Laughter) so here it goes. Here is my advice. So regardless of whether or not you consult in the field, and I hope that you would, I do think you that should get a hobby. But I think that it should be something cool.

(Laughter)

And here is a tip. If the hobby has the word "Heirloom," raising tomatoes, sheep, breeds of any kind, it's not cool!

(Laughter).

So what would be cool? I am going to throw out two ideas. You are not limited. I am getting you thinking. So cat burglar.

(Laughter)

For me, what sells this is the slim silhouette. But for you I think that the gadgets would sell it.

(Laughter)

And the money! I hear that even moderately successful cat burglar does pretty well!

(Laughter).

Option 2. Professional poker player.

(Laughter)

Now, I know you that have been holding on to your amateur standing for awhile. But I think that you could turn pro. In fact, I think actually all you have to do is say that I declare that I am a professional. Think about this people will never question you when you say you that have to go to Vegas, or Monte Carlo for a tournament. They won't ever question why you pay for information cash. And declaring yourself to be a professional poker player is a pretty good cover for bag cat burglar!

(Laughter).

So that's all the advice that I have really. I know that it can't compare with the advice that you've given me over the years. George, it really has been a true pleasure for me. To be, and an honor, to be mentored by you. And I do want to thank you for all of your guidance. And the chance just to observe you in action. You are really, truly out of this world. For those of how have been curious about the right answers to those early lessons that I shared with you, be a lifelong learner, stay on message no matter what, know sometimes you have to take a calculated risk, and if an interview is going really, really well, for the love of God do not leave to put more money meter!

(Laughter).

(Applause).

>> Well, the evening is at about mid‑point, and I think that we've burned through all of the good roasting material there is of George. He doesn't give us too much to work with really. So following the President, another closet Canadian, Senator Ted Cruz who tried to delay the inevitable. I thought I would read a bedtime story to all of you and our children. So the name of ‑‑ the story is called "The Life and Times of George Jesien."

Once upon a time in a land not too far from here, there lived a boy name George. Not Curious George, though he was curious, and not George of the Jungle, though he was adventure use, and not Georgie Porgie, pudding pie, though he sometimes did make girls cry, George grew up in an ordinary Polish‑American family in an ordinary house. And he did all of the ordinary things that boys growing up do. And he survived. Now, when George was about 8 years old, he decided that he really wanted to become a priest. Now, if he had become a priest, Father George would have given Mother Teresa a real run for her money, because George Jesien had the IQ and the EQ, and the GQ to be really good at whatever he wanted! And he wanted to become a priest more than anything so that he could do good deeds and say important things and be admired by everyone who knew him. And all that happened over time anyway.

But if George had become a priest, then he would never have married Pam, who might instead have hooked up with a trekker from Tibet. Or ‑‑ or married a banker from Baltimore. And Betsy and Andrew would have been nothing more than Stardust in their father's dreams. And the world of disability would have been much worse off. But that's not what happened!

(Laughter)

When he was about 13, the sea of testosterone washed over him, and he thought bother things, and he didn't think it was such a great idea to be a priest anymore, and that's when he probably did break a few girls' hearts. So George went off to University. He did all of the things that young men do. He grew his hair long. He sang folk songs. He traveled around the world. And made he even inhaled a little.

(Laughter)

When he finally grew up and started to make money, something that his family had been waiting a long time for.

(Laughter)

He became good at writing grants, and consulting on early intervention. And when he had done that long enough, he decided to come a Kennedy Policy Fellow. After that he went into the Kennedy Foundation executive director trial by fire program.

(Laughter)

And then he finally came to AAUAP. But it was a destitute and beleaguered AAUAP, one that could have used a good banker. Those were tough times. But after a lot of hard work by Board Members like Sherry White and Red, and many, many others, the organization pulled itself up by the bootstraps and remade itself because this is America after all!

(Applause)

And then George said, "We need a new name!"

(Laughter)

Well, in the spirit of compromise, the Board developed a new name. AUCEEDDMRLMLSEPTC. But it was unpronounceable! So George said you only get two vowels and two consonants!

(Laughter) and that is how we have the name AUCD.

(Laughter)

Or awkward, but only if you are from Boston!

(Laughter)

So for his next trick, George turned AUCD into a training program for future leaders of America for disability. And over that 14 years of many people enrolled in the academy with notable graduates like Artie Flare, Maggie Nygren, Aaron Bishop, and many, many others, and they all went out and they did good things and said important things and were admired by everyone. Now, with AUCD executive director, George got to play with some pretty big boys and girls in Washington, D.C. There was Stevie who never met a person he couldn't insult!

(Laughter) but always in a good way. And Sue, who was a real pusher about positions for enviable futures and cloud computing. And there was Andy Impertnator who planned to fill big shoes by stuffing them with private dollars. Well, AUCD grew and grew and grew. Delegates from all over the world, places like Australia and Dubai, they all came to learn at AUCD. And with grants from MCH and AIDD for SSA and CDC, more money flowed to the programs than they had ever known. And they all thought they would live happily ever after. And the days and the nights passed very quickly. George grew his hair long again. But now it was because he forgot to cut it.

(Laughter)

And he still enjoyed a stiff joint now and then but it was a different kind. And it happened when he rode his bicycle over long country roads, forgetting that he had to ride back, too! But he continued to do bigger and good deeds and say even more important things and be admired by even more people who knew him. And then one day before any of us knew it decided that it was time for new adventures, and time to say good night, AUCD. So it's time to say good night, interminable annual conference planning, good night unpredictable turnover in the Board of Directors. Good night formidable budget planning. Good night Senate directors special requests. Good night indecipherable RFPs.

(Laughter)

good night to the Gods and goddesses of the federal agencies. Good night to the staff that he has loved and mentored. Good night AUCD. And so from all of us, good night, George Jesien.

(Applause).

>> Well, good evening, everyone! Everyone having fun?

(Cheers and applause).

George, are you having fun?

(Laughter).

My name is Lu, and I am the UCEDD director from Maine. And to give him the lineup we have had so far, I guess that I should say that I am also the associate provost and dean of lifelong learning so here you go, George! I want to thank everyone for being here to share the event. And, George, I want to particularly thank you. For being you. And for providing such great fuel for this bonfire ‑‑ I mean roast. George, we first met about 15 years ago when you were still at the Joseph Kennedy, junior, Foundation, and I was becoming a Kennedy Public Policy Fellow. As I recall, you left they then, too. You he left me to become the director of AAUAP. And later I got to know you even better, as a member of the Board, then President, and then continuously in the lifelong process of being the legislative affairs co‑chair. Over the years, I've gotten to know many sides of you, George. And although there have been fedups over the evening, I can still tell you that I would like to share a few of my favorite sayings, or Georgeisms, that really demonstrate the many sides of George Jesien.

I would like to begin with George, the policy wonk. This particular Georgeism is directed to the co‑chairs of the legislative affairs committee. And it goes something like this we'll be working on piece of legislation, and George will say, "Do you think that we can get some language and funding in that bill to support the AUCD network?"

Preferably before Chris Decker ceases to ‑‑

(Laughter).

And next there is George the techie. We've heard all about George the techie. But there is another Georgeism. Often directed at a Board Member, a staff member, or actually anyone who listens.

(Laughter)

And it goes something like this. Wait until you see this really cool app that just came out!

(Laughter).

Wait, wait, wait! I'll beam it to you. Or, even better yet, I'll Tweet it!

(Laughter).

And then there is George the adventurer. Now, we've heard a little bit about George the adventurer. And thank you, Maggie, for the story. Because once George suggested that the entire AUCD staff at a team‑building retreat do this. Let's all rent Segways!

(Laughter).

It will be great fun! And it's very safe. He didn't want to go in for any of the heavy adventure team‑building things. For those of how missed it, George wore a sling for a long time. George, you also is another side of you, and that's the can‑do guy. This was most obvious in some of the conversations when I was President and would be sitting in with George with some of our international partners, in particular I remember meeting with the Dubai delegation. George said something like this. Sure, we can recruit a team of top disability experts to work with Dubai to institute countrywide inclusion. And, yes, we can be there tomorrow.

(Laughter)

George, we also know you as a great problem solver. And after several years of struggling with a particularly tough problem, you offer the following solution to the executive committee of the Board. We can increase attendance at the 8:00 A.M. AUCD business meeting held on the last day of the conference if we raffle off really cool techie stuff!

(Laughter).

And require people to be there to win. As we all know, that actually works.

(Laughter)

What you didn't realize, George, was that if you told people they would have a chance to roast George, they would have paid to attend!

(Laughter).

Not everyone knows this, but you also have a very curious side. Well, Liz knows this. But your curious side also has a bit of conspiracy theorist to it. So several time as year in a hotel lobby bar, and typically in the company of a group of men that includes Bill Kiernan, David Johnson, Bob Bacon, Tony Antosh, you've been known to say, follow that group of AUCD chicks. Trying to slip out of the lobby. They say they're going to dinner. But I think they're planning a coup. Oh, you silly man! They were planning a roast!

(Laughter).

And, George, last but not least, there is George the workaholic. And I want you to know that I am keeping to the 5‑minute timetable. And George would have known better than to put me up here. George the workaholic. The say something more of a personal mantra that I think that I have heard you say over and over again under your breath. If Mrs. Shriver could do it 24/7 well into her 80s, so can I. So I can. So I can. And so, dear George, we, along with Mrs. Shriver looking down from above have very high expectation for the next chapter of your life. The adventures of George in, out, and about this world. And we expect to include a lot of tweeting.

(Applause).

>> Oh, boy! Because I can't imagine doing this afterwards.

>> You're right. Nice chair, George.

>> Thanks!

>> Hello! I'm Fred. And I am the only thing standing between and you the second half of the program. And I was told to announce that the performance measures should gather outside the room. I see people moving. Way outside of the room!

(Laughter)

Yes, you understand why they call this ‑‑

>> Oh this is not going to be good either.

>> So Bob Bacon asked me to speak to represent the viewpoint of someone who retired. And I am not sure if the fact that I went back to work is really relevant here.

(Laughter)

I mean, I failed retirement.

(Laughter)

But, George, you're not. You know, I think that the real take away for you, George is that I did retire, like you are. And I was pretty good at it for, well, you know, almost two years.

(Laughter)

And you will be terrific, George! You have all of the natural qualities of a successful retired person. First of all, you look like one!

(Laughter).

I mean, with that hat, you look like one quite frankly!

(Laughter).

I mean, sure, when you are wearing a suit, you know, you look distinguished. But throw on a polo shirt and shorts, you are going to blend right in at your local supermarket!

(Laughter).

You've got that beard going on. And, second, you have the natural mellowness of a retired person. And one day you will wake up and you will realize that you are not responsible for saving the world from bizarre federal policy issues!

(Laughter)

And you will ooze mellowness from every pore. And, third, you are a technology wiz which allows you not only to be proficient within the existing social networks, but you probably will want to create your own. I am thinking GeorgeBook. And there may even be a Twitter feeding frenzy in a few months disabling the entire system. And you are in the prime of your life. You knew that, right?

>> Not totally! You know, we always hear that we're prime. But no one has really ever defined what it means. I mean, there is the prime rate. You know, that has an objective definition. And prime rib. You know, butchers can tell you exactly what a prime rib is. And let's not forget prime numbers. Did you know that today it's 11, 17, 13, all prime numbers?

(Laughter).

And is that a omen? Maybe! So I turn to every researcher's best source for clarity, Wikipedia.

(Laughter).

And they define prime as the stage in your life when you are most active or most successful. Now, George, having lots to do for many years most of what I saw was person sitting at a conference table, or working on a computer, not so active. So you should be able to meet that criterion with no problem. You've got that licked. And, finally, George, you are going to be a successful retiree because you are taking care of your health! And I understand, in fact, you that have making the switch from coffee to tea; is that true?

>> A little.

>> So I have these chocolate bars made in Belgium. With tea in them. This gives you both the advantages of the dark chocolate and the tea, okay?

>> Thank you.

>> You are welcome. Now, I did note, though, that the stock in Starbucks has been plummeting as of late. And analysts have tracked that drop to a decrease in profit from the Starbucks store in and around Bethesda, Maryland. We think that you are the source of that, George. Now, you've got all of these great qualities that are predictive of successful retirement. But despite that you may struggle with the loss of recognition that comes from stepping down from a position in which you have achieved great success and fame. And the following video will help demonstrate what I mean.

(Video).

>> And now, AUCD news with our man about town, Fred.

>> This is Fred with AUCD news. We're here in Richmond, Virginia, getting citizen reactions to George Jesien's retirement. And we're going to be talking to citizen ‑‑ oh, here comes one now. Excuse me, I am with AUCD news. Your first name is?

>> My name is Al.

>> Hey, Al. Good to meet you. Thanks for stopping. I am trying to get reaction to George Jesien's retirement. Do you have any thoughts about that?

>> George jettison, the space cartoon guy?

>> No, no, that was a cartoon character. This is a real person named George Jesien.

>> Was he on hold squares?

>> Not to my knowledge.

>> No I have never heard of him. But best of luck to him.

>> Thank you, Al. Thank you. Well, there is one person's reaction. I wonder if we might get somebody else. Oh, excuse me, excuse me.

>> Hold on. I have a he got to go.

>> Yes.

>> Hi, I'm sorry, I am with AUCD news.

>> AUCD! Oh, wow! Well, my name is Donna. Are we on camera?

>> We are on camera, yes!

(Laughter).

>> I'm just wondering, do you have any reactions to George Jesien's retirement?

>> George Jesien from astronomers united for credibility determination?

>> No. Do you know a George Jesien from that organization?

>> Yes, we do. He is a famous guy in our organization. He is wonderful! And he is retiring!

>> Seriously?

>> Yeah.

>> That's an amazing coincidence. What's your organization again?

>> It's the Association of University Centers on Disabilities.

>> Are we talking about this guy? I just got this ‑‑ are we talking about little George there?

>> Well, let me see that.

>> Right here? George?

>> Well that is the same George, yes.

>> He is out of this world.

>> He is out of this world.

>> So that's yes belongs to astronomers unified for credibility.

>> Well, yeah, whatever. All right. Well, thank you, Donna. I appreciate you stopping by. And you can continue your phone call now!

(Laughter)

>> Thank you very much! Good luck you to, George.

>> I appreciate that thank you. And there we have it. At least two citizens' reactions to George Jesien's retirement.

(Laughter)

(Applause).

>> We're here in for the love of chocolate, central Virginia's premier chocolate shop. We're speaking to its proprietor. James, I am wondering, do you have any reaction to the retirement of George Jesien?

>> (Speaking Spanish).

>> Well, thank you. I think that I just got everything except I'm not sure of that last line. Do you mind repeating that in English for the camera.

>> I said, by George, he is out of this world!

>> There you have it by George, he is out of this world! From love of chocolate, AUCD News reporting.

(End of video).

(Applause).

>> Performance measures. George, you are awesome a run out of this world! Thank you, man!

(Applause).

>> Thank you for the chocolate. I really appreciate it, too!

>> All right! Let's have ‑‑ roasters, you did a fantastic job! Let's give them a round of applause!

(Applause).

>> And now, you know, what roast or retirement party would be complete without the performance measures. Please join me in welcoming the performance measures!

(Applause).

>> I shall be the narrator of this cautionary tale. And Steve will play the role of George Jesien. And it goes something like this. Hopefully.

(Sing) down in old Silver Springs, George was having a fit on Twitter, oh, Twitter, will Twitter.

There is a new bill in Congress, I can not permit, I'll Twitter, yes, Twitter, I'll Twitter.

So to rally his troops, to his imminent need, he began to compose, the troop's creed. It has a Thesaurus. A Harvard boy. In hopes to create a new message stampede on Twitter, on Twitter, on Twitter.

Brilliant, isn't it? He knew that his purpose and point must be clear. Completely avoidance of clutter. He choose only words people wanted to hear, no unwanted pros would he utter. But he saw that he had, a few characters left, no, no, no, back, back, back!

(Laughter)

But he saw that he had a few characters left, and he added a line that he thought was quite defendant. He said help me, I look and I shutter. He pulled out his SmartPhone and started to text. You're making me go fast. He pulled out his SmartPhone and started to text.

(Laughter).

Clicking his transmitter. But when he realized what would ensue next, he deeply felt rueful and bitter. Ash I go on?

>> Yeah, keep going.

>> He felt rueful and bitter. And his thousands of supporters, they were all stricken down, when they noticed his message denouncing the bonds. Because of auto correct and his ginormous thumbs, now said help me I'm locked in the shitter!

(Laughter)

>> It's time for chapter 2.

>> (Singing)

When you host a Webinar, makes no difference where you are, anything you want to say will all sound true.

When you want a Webinar from its credit, then collect the modest fee, nothing is really free, we need the revenue. Who knows if they're really there. Might be playing solitaire. If they joined your Webinar they can't be viewed. When your mug controls the screen, you could read a magazine, when you host a Webinar just keep it clean.

Or change your mood. You can lecture in the nude. Or pretend you're Dr. Lu, it's for the outcomes. We can tell you want to do when you're he presentation's through. After every Webinar you lend a hand.

(Applause).

>> Thank you!

>> Okay.

>> I want to thank the Performance Measures. Let's give them a big hand!

(Applause).

As well as Bob, Andy, all of the roasters. George, we've come to that part of the program you were trying to avoid. Although for the past hour you wouldn't know we have respect for you, we do incredibly. I'm Leslie Cohen. I'm the conference chair and the President‑Elect of AUCD and the director of the Sonoran UCEDD in Arizona, and I am pleased to introduce this part of our program. We would be remiss if we didn't take a few moments to recognize the great contribution George has made to our network and to the disability community on a national and international level. We're fortunate tonight in that Scott Cooper who couldn't be here who many of you know from the Our Story Project who has been collecting media video history of people in the disability movement for many years evidently had the forethought who to collect some testimonies about George. And so we have a short video from Scott Cooper that we would like to show right now.

(Video).

¶

>> It's our story.

>> What makes George George?

>> George knows this organization. He knows its members. He knows what we do George represents that sort of that Washington perspective in that he has to know about 100 issues. And he knows them well. And he knows this network in a way that he knows who is an exemplar of good practice, and 100 different things. And he'll look to go out and say, and I need to learn 100 more. And you guys to be doing 100 more. And I'm going to do everything that I can to keep up with you to know them so that when I am in a place where somebody needs to hear about what can be, he is a person who has access to a lot of folks that say how can your organization help me? And he has 100 things at his fingertips that he can say this is how a member of my organization can help you in what you do. And I think that that is powerful, powerful gift. And that could cover the anywhere from the science to the practice, from birth to grave. Literally hundreds of examples. And that is powerful.

>> I was on the search committee. And we had so many qualified people. But it just was clear to me right from the beginning that George was our guy. And in this period where when George came on board, so the organization was ready to be taken someplace new, but we weren't sure where.

>> And I think that the thing that's really been terrific in that the catalyst that has given the network the biggest boost I would say, and I think that this is a fair statement, was really George Jesien coming on.

>> I think that effective leadership is contextual in many cases, but that it's the right match for the right situation.

>> George Jesien, he has strategic thinking that is so important in that role.

>> George is special. He is a visionary. He is strategic. He thinks outside of the box. He is an incredible facilitator. And he is a good person. And those things are important that go a long way. He has got, you know, you can trust him. He has got integrity.

>> George had the ability to both contribute to the dialogue, but also to take in and integrate these voices. So he is a doer. He is tireless. He works very hard.

>> George has the ability to make everyone feel involved and interested. You never feel like there is sort of an in group and an out group. He has more open files in his head at anyone time than anybody that I know. I mean, he is just (snapping) really on top of so many complex issues. He has helped to frame ways to talk about the value of the network. And in really creative ways.

>> I think that George's vision and leadership of cementing the network in a way, and making it giving us the notion that we can be bigger than a series of individual programs. Really got a tremendous boost with his coming on board.

>> And he works way too hard, way too many hours. But he loves what he does. So I think that's the only thing that makes it sort of semi‑okay.

(Laughter).

>> He is careful always to not get out too far, too far ahead of the organization.

>> He doesn't go off mission, so to speak. But he looks for opportunities, and then engages it.

>> He comes away often with additional funding for the network. But it's not like he is going in saying we need additional funding. He is saying how can we help? It seems like he is always find the win‑win.

>> Keeping his eye on the prize at all times. Keeping in his mind and his brain 100 things concurrently and seeing them all as important and interconnected. He is unique in that regard. I mean, I have not worked with anyone that has quite that blend of skill at that level.

>> Well, he doesn't take liberties. He certainly because of his success and leadership abilities has really a lot of social capital.

>> He has a good sense of where the right place to be is on any particular moment.

>> He knows how to connect people and, you know, it's so important. And he have vision. For me, those are important elements for a great leader as George is.

>> He alls up that he is going to do the work which is different in many ways than a lot of people who show up at the same events.

>> A representative of the organization.

>> He has got a sense of humor. So we roast him all the time. But I guess the funniest story is when we had a staff retreat and he was ‑‑ we all took Segways and, you know, he is a show off, so he likes to ‑‑ he thinks that can, I don't know, he thinks he is still 17, and so he thinks that he is still invincible. And he was showing off and went off a curb and broke something.

(Laughter)

And so we roast him all the time about that.

>> He's got an amazing ability to see the big picture and to move things forward.

>> It seems like he can always find the win‑win. I just think that he has been a terrific leader for us. There are few people I want to clone, and he is one of them.

>> We plus you equals power, passion, pride. The Our Story Project is a national effort to make disability history public and acceptable. Visit us at www.itsourstory.org.

(End of video).

(Applause).

>> We've promised that would be the last mention of the Segway story!

(Laughter)

But we do want to honor your contributions, George, and I would like to now call up Tony Antosh, AUCD's past‑past President, and this year's awards committee chair, and a long‑time colleague of George to the stage to present something that demonstrates just how important George is to us all and the impact that he has had on the lives of people with disabilities. Tony will be followed by Bill Kiernan who is also a past President of AUCD and long‑time colleague of George. He will talk about our emerging leaders scholarship fund that many of you contributed to tonight in support of George and his support of emerging leaders in the field. So thank you.

>> TONY ANTOSH: So in February when George announced to the Board that he was retiring, we were very concerned about what he would do. And what we all said fundamentally is that, well, George has been an actor for a long time. We've seen him perform. And so we thought we would go to Hollywood and recruit a film company who has done several films with George. And part of my job here tonight is to give you a preview. So this is George of Arabia. By the way, the punchline with this is that you all know that story about a camel being a horse designed by a committee. George chairs that committee. You've all seen the movie "Jobs," and you've heard about George's fascination with technology, we're going to do an update to the movie "Jobs" called "Jesien."

And here is a scene from it the subtitle is, "Mine is bigger than yours."

And then for people who really know George, the question is: Where do I leave my laptop?

(Laughter)

(Laughter)

We will never let it die, George. Then there is the thin blue line. From the Tea Party. I didn't say that. And then there is grownups. And hangover!

(Laughter)

(Laughter)

And the best one that we have been waiting for is the remake of South Pacific!

(Laughter)

So we thought as you all know that every year AUCD recognizes people in the network, outside of the network who have done really significant work to improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families. And we thought that it was is ready serving to honor George and to allow the legacy to live on is to rename one of the AUCD awards in George's name. And so beginning in 2014, somebody every year will receive the George Jesien distinguished achievement award.

(Applause).

So congratulations!

(Applause).

>> Oh, boy! Thank you, sir.

>> They asked me to do the serious one. But I know how you are into data. And I just wanted to tell you that there are 440 people here this evening. 436 are here to see Pam.

(Laughter)

And Maggie wanted me to remind you of the fact that that $30 is now up to 60.

So what are the advantages when George is gone? When George is gone, people will stop asking me, are you George Jesien?

(Laughter)

(Laughter)

Some of you wondered where George has been in the last three weeks. Well, he signed a short‑term contract. And the short‑term contract was the Boston Red Sox. And they wanted George to use his expertise to get their ducks in a row. And the second issue with George it was lead the Fenway baseball. And the Red Sox did win the world series.

(Cheers and applause).

Now, in another light, as I've gone over to the dark side of the moon, one of the things that we looked at was how about an endowed chair. And we looked at them and we said, okay, let's look at the types of chairs that we might consider. Some are a little too formal. And how about the one like this one coming up? You know how George could never pass up a lecturing. And then there is the chair that George could take with him. And then, of course, there is the one that has that personal quality to it.

(Laughter)

But you know, George is impassioned with interdisciplinary training. So we thought maybe it's not a chair. Maybe it's a bench so he can bring other disciplines up with him. Then we thought maybe it should and portrait so that we can make him a portrait. And as you can see, when we talked to Pam, she said, they ever never going hang in our bedroom. So we scrapped that idea. And then we thought, how about a building? Let's name a building. And, of course, we approached the mayor who was the mayor of Boston who you know is also retiring after 38 years, or something like that, and we looked and we said, hey, mayor, how about George take over a very famous building, and he could do his usual thing, which is oneth by AAIDD. And we can approach Trinity Church and see if they would be called the Jesien Church. Next slide. And then the chance for the University of Massachusetts in Boston to see whether, in fact, the campus center could be named the Jesien Center. All of those fell by the wayside. So we thought there would be an opportunity for a style of beer called The George. So we approached the Red Sox and asked them whether they would enter it into the line of the beers that you saw on most of the Red Sox play. Now, you will love to see the second line down, the very first someone is mine. George, you can't have that one! So we went through a series of exhaustive things and finally came up and said what we should do is focus in on what George is committed and passionate about. He is committed and passionate about leadership. And so what we looked for, if we can move forward in the slides, was George one of the things that George has always cared about is who will lead in the future. And he has always been passionate about this organization, and the capacity of bringing new leaders up. He always felt that this conference was the best deal in town for the opportunity of networking, sharing, and learn being disabilities. And so the Board of Directors this year established the AUCD emerging leadership scholarship fund which raises money to support up and coming leaders in the network in disability field from self‑advocates to family members to students and to young career professionals to attend the AUCD conference where they can learn and connect and grow. And I am pleased to announce tonight that we have raised $17,000 on behalf of that scholarship!

(Applause).

We feel that this reflects the essence of George's passion about the future and the opportunities for you and those folks in this audience to become the leaders that he has so successfully demonstrated in his future role, working up in Boston, in his future role you will see the leadership capacity of George stay forever in this organization. Thank you, George!

(Applause).

And I think that the staff would like to come up.

>> As you can see, without George here we're not organized any more.

(Laughter)

I'm not a roaster, George, but I do have to follow up on what Aaron said. You really did on 9/11, when I was in trouble, and I was walking the 10 miles back from the Hill because I was afraid to get on the Metro actually. The Metro was open. But I was afraid that the President at the time would declare marshal law and I wouldn't be able to get back to my kids. George got on the phone with me, and I said ‑‑ I actually said don't. I said don't come this way because everybody is trying to get out. I said do not come. He wouldn't listen. And he did. He came down and I will never forget what he said. Because I opened the car door and he just looked at me and said, "Nothing will ever be the same again."

Or something like that. And I was like, I couldn't grasp that at the time. But he was totally right! And to me I will never forget it because it just demonstrates what a visionary leader he has always been. He always got it. I just ‑‑ you've always been so ‑‑ you just have this insight and this vision and this passion that nobody can replicate. Our staff felt it, too, feel it is, too. And when we made this transition I just ‑‑ it was palpable how hard it has been for this staff to know that someone as beloved as George moving on. But we're also really happy for him. I particularly am really happy for him because we share a passion for cycling, and being active. And I, myself, have not been too sad because I know that I'm going to still be friends with George because we've developed a friendship that will never go away. But as far as going into danger thing? I don't think that will ever stop. I got a little worried when I was heard that he was in Toronto with the mayor partying.

(Laughter)

I just want to say, George, can you just like stay a little bit straight, you know he?

(Laughter)

(Laughter)

So I am here to, I guess, we already gave him one gift. It was a picture album of, you know, just a history of all of the staff which was really fun. But we wanted to make ‑‑ we wanted you to not forget us. We're getting you something that I think that you'll probably never use.

(Laughter)

Or maybe if the kids produce grandchildren you might need to rock them. So we thought we would give you something to rock your way into retirement. Or at least ‑‑

(Applause).

‑‑ or at least have some permanent fixture that has AUCD written on it.

(Applause).

Try it out go ahead! Be careful! Careful!

(Applause) on behalf of the AUCD who love you dearly, and appreciate everything that you've done for us, and all of your mentorship, and how much fun you are. We really did love to roast him like I said on the video. I can just tell a couple of favorites? I don't know who came up with it but I think that one of the west ones, where we did sticky tapes of all of our notes, and, I don't know, there was at least a few hundred where we just started writing little notes to him of like things to do or things that you have to do, all over his ‑‑ we should have had a picture of that, darn it ‑‑ all over his office. And apparently he recently said that he saved them. And then one time he was just so fun to roast. He is just so fun to do April fool jokes on. I don't know whose idea this was. Somebody fess up. They put Saran wrap on his door so when he came to the office, wonk!

(Laughter)

(Laughter)

Because he just had such a great sense of humor. So we all really appreciated that. We appreciated the techie points. And the fun and dangerous retreats. We all really trust each other now!

(Laughter)

(Laughter)

So thank you, George!

(Applause).

>> Well now we have reached the halfway point!

(Laughter)

(Laughter)

>> And I'm really glad that most of you are here. I hope many of you have taken the pity on me that has made me sit with that hat, and I'm sure that the Bacon twins have been baking this for a long, long time. So you've done a great, great job.

I feel like I should just cry and get off the stage. I'm humbled. I'm thankful. And this has been a wonderful night. And I thank you for sticking around. I want to thank all of the people who have contributed, who have bought tables, who have participated. And I want you to know that I hope that this scholarship fund really turns into something important. I've heard a number of times that I got the idea for this grant, I connected for my next degree, I joined up with a couple of other people that will get this idea moving at this conference. And I hope that this scholarship makes that a much more common occurrence that as we get together, we find ways of working with each other. And I think that's what this meeting has been. When we first started, 200 was a great goal. And it was a successful conference. And 200 right now would be absolute failure, and I think all of the staff know that I go nuts when we're waiting for the registrations to come in because I think that it is a barometer of our folks wanting to get with each other. So I want to thank you for contributing. I want to thank all of you who have planned this. You've kept me all in the dark. I tend to be a little bit of a control freak.

(Laughter)

And I do knew nothing about this evening. The only thing that I was in large of were the lines to get in here. And that was my design.

(Laughter)

And I figured if we could lump you into one long line, it would really speed things up. It didn't work out so well. But me and the ObamaCare folks have been working on ‑‑

(Laughter).

(Applause)

how to get folks processed through quickly and you're all here! So it was a success. I don't have a lot to say tonight. But I do want to take a couple of minutes. The great religions of the world in many instances have an opportunity that they present to clean the slates, to atone, to apologize. And I'm going to start out that way. So before I go on, I want to ask for your forgiveness for the unanswered e‑mail, for the delayed response, for the telephone call that didn't get answered for a week or two, for the thing I said I was going to send you tomorrow that didn't come until a month later or after two reminders. I want you to know that that was not done out of malice or bad intent. For the short phrase, for the abrupt termination of a conversation, for the scowl of disapproval, or of not agreeing, which my wife says shows up all kinds of times. I'm sorry. It was not meant badly, but it was more reflection of my overestimation of what I could do in the time that was ahead, and thinking that there were more hours in the day and days in the week. And so let me first get that out there. You've heard some good things about me tonight.

(Laughter)

And you've heard about my foibles that are probably more true than you know. And thank you, Maggie, I really do appreciate you not bringing all of them up!

(Laughter)

And I gave you $20 the first 10 is on you. You came for interview!

(Laughter)

So I wanted to just clean that slate. I have many sins of omission, things that did not get done. And I hope those did not cause any unnecessary consternation or anxiety on your part. Secondly I can't get off this stage without thanking the staff that has worked there for 14 years. Gwenn has been through thick and thin and is still there. She was there when there were three of us. She was there when the balance sheet showed $23,000 available for the next month. And she stuck with it. And there have been over the years staff that have come, that have learned, that have contributed, and that have moved on in their careers and their lives, had babies, moved on to new jobs. And I have to tell you that it has been an incredible pleasure to work with you. It's a joy to come into the office with that staff. They're bright. They're committed. They're passionate. They want to do right. And it's just a joy to be in an office like that. I want to thank the Board. The Board has changed five times over the 14 years. And to a person they get nothing. We don't pay their travel. We give them a dinner of chicken and sometimes if they're lucky it's pork chops. And they come every single time, and they deal with the issues of policy and practice and what the feds are doing, and what they can do to improve the lives of people with disability. They have supported AUCD all wait along. Whether we're talking AIDD, MCH, CDC, SSA for awhile. They have been true supporters of the network, and it's been a pleasure to work with the people there. The partner organizations in Washington, the true collaborators, AAIDD, the arc, UCP, NDRN, the councils, we really all have been even though we have our own interest on the same page of moving the agenda forward, and their leadership and their staff have always wanted to collaborate. So the job I've done is not the work I've done, but it's the work that we've done. When I came on to AUCD, and I described to my wife what the position entailed, there was somebody in California that had absconded with some money. There was double suit with the bank back and forth. I described it to my wife, and she said, and the reason you want this job is what exactly?

(Laughter)

And you know what happened was it was you folks. It was the centers that each contributed money to get us out of that hole. You committed to the organization. You committed to the network. You committed to AAUAP at that time, and, yes, you sort of took a bet on me and said maybe this guy can pull us out of this hole with our work. But it was the Board and the directors and the entire network that said, okay, let's turn a page and let's move forward. Let's get this behind us and let's see what we can do. It wasn't the office. It wasn't AUCD. It was really the entire network. And I think as we look at and as I look back over the last 15 years that's what we've done. First big effort was Social Security. We changed the way ‑‑ not me, you, all of us working together changed the way that kids with disabilities and teenagers, and young adults were going to be assessed. We changed the definition of terms. We changed the practice, and we changed the training procedures of people who were going to do the adjudication.

(Applause)

We not only helped to pass the most significant piece of Autism legislation with Kim and all of you folks who called in and visited, but we also changed the training and through our 50 states that participated in identification and how do we do systems change, we changed the face of how we seek out kids as early as possible not just for autism, but for all developmental disabilities. That wasn't me. It wasn't just the staff. It was an amazing call out to the field: Will you help to coordinate? Will you help facilitate? Will you help identify the folks that need to be at the table? And all of you responded. And in 2.5 years we have all 50 states and all territories in the country. And we did it for about 350,000. And I bet you there is not another outfit in the United States that could do that again. That was because what you were willing to put up in terms of staff time and energy and getting on your Rolodex to identify who needed to be there. I think the next important thing that we did is the same thing for self‑determination. We took it out of something that Sharon had in the back of her mind as something that needed to be put out front and at the top of the radar screen, and that call went out to you again, and we all responded and we did the same thing in all 50 states. Yes, there are challenges, and there are problems, but we had people all over this country including self‑advocates and every single state sitting down at the table with policy and decision‑makers on what we were going to do different in that state. And to me, that is the network, is how do you turn a national policy, a national effort into something that happens at each and every state? And that's the way change occurs and you folks responded, and I have to tell you that it is an incredible sense of satisfaction to know that you folks are out there, and willing to move things forward to get something done. So I look back at the last 14 years and I say, "Are things better? Have we really gotten something accomplished?" I think that the answer is yes. I think that there is more equity. I think there is more awareness. I think there is more opportunity. And I think there is a whole host of young people that are out there right now with the kinds of values and commitment and passion that they wouldn't have had had it not been for our efforts. So I congratulate all of you fork the work that you've done. Let me try to finish this up so that you can go home. I do have four challenges that I think are ahead of us. I think that the first is that continual striving for improvement and excellence. It's in our name and if we ever give up on that we're going to lose our position. And it's up to us in this room and those at this meeting and the folks at home to make sure that we keep pushing the envelope for that excellence and for continuing to strive for being better than we are.

The word that we fought for weeks was university centers for excellence or of excellence. A little preposition that what does it mean? Of? For? What's the difference? Of excellence said we are there! And we are the ones that have the answer. For excellence says, no, we're fighting. We're striving. We're looking. We're seeking. And that's what we named ourselves. And that's why we've got to continue to strive. New leadership is the second challenge. I'm not the only old person in this room.

(Laughter)

There are a lot of us around this age. The epiphany hit me it was time to move on and let somebody else move in. And that epiphany has got to hit a lot of us in the next few years. And we've got to prepare for that next generation of folks moving on. My hope is that the transitions that you and I plan are better than the ones that I stepped into. God loves Steve Eidelman. He has been my job coach for 20 years!

(Laughter)

But when he left, he left me a pile of memos. And on the second or third page was an invoice for $4,000. We didn't have $4,000. But he wrote in handwritten tell them to pound sand.

(Laughter)

And I looked at that, and I said, tell them to pound sand! Do I call them up? Do I send them a memo like that? What do I do with that? My hope is that our transitions are much, much better than that.

(Laughter)

I'm sorry you missed that, Steve.

Third, diversity. I'm sorry. We're not there yet. We've got a ways to go. And we've been talking about it for 20 years. And we got to do more. We've got to seek more. We've got to push more. We've got to get more in the pipeline because this country is a changing. And you don't need me to tell you that. And it's something that we have to figure out. I think that another rubric or barometer of our success is how diverse this audience becomes over the next five, 10, 15 years. And if we don't move in that direction, we're going to be passed by. So that's not ‑‑ that's a lot of our challenge. That's something that we all have to work on.

And then the last for me is we are the incubators of change, creativity, and innovation. The blessing that we have are those 20‑year‑olds and those 25‑year‑olds that we interact with every single day who have the new ideas, who have been using SmartPhones since they were 6 years of age. And it's capturing them in this process and trying to find the next best way to do something that I think is our challenge.

So let me segue ‑‑

(Laughter).

You thought you were done with it didn't you? Well, you're not!

(Laughter)

Well the last people I want to thank and apologize to is my family. For the missed dinners, for being late, for not making that dance recital, or that track meet, or that school meeting. I apologize. And for my wife who was a single mom a good part of the time. I don't know how she did it. I couldn't have done it. She kept the family together. She kept it moving forward. And had to do what she had to do. And I want to thank you. This couldn't have happened had she not allowed me to do that. And I look forward ‑‑

(Applause).

And I look forward to many years of a more equitable sharing.

(Laughter)

Of house duties and all of the other things that go with it that I know are going to be exceedingly pleasurable as I learn how to do them.

(Laughter)

So finally the next steps. I don't know where they're going to go. I do know this. That I'm not throwing away my keyboard. I love my three monitors! And if you really want to increase your productivity, the one tip that I have for you tonight is get three. Really! It will change your life. And you will find spirit and soul and ying‑yang, and it's really in the monitors. And if you can get more than two, you really are driving the ship. And it's just a blessing. So go out and seek additional monitors.

(Laughter)

I'm going to kickback for awhile. But I want to stay involved. I want to contribute. I want to help. So we'll see where that goes. And I hope that our paths will cross many times after this.

I have to tell you what makes this feel so good is the process that we've gone through over the last six months. The Board, Leslie, Julie, Tony, and the seriousness with which they took the leadership of this organization, and they found somebody who I think is the right man for the right time. And it feels so good stepping away because Andy's there, and he is committed, and he knows this stuff, and he knows an incredible number of people who can help this network move forward the agenda of improving the lives of people with disabilities. So stepping away from this, in a sense, is a joy. It's like saying, All right, you've pitched a few innings, but now you've got another star coming, and, boy, just get off the mound and let him start pitching. So that's what I'm going to do. And, honestly, I can't say it in any other way. Just thank you from the bottom of my heart. This job has been a dream job. And tonight for years to come when I think of it, that Grecian smile will come across my face just remembering tonight. So thank you very much!

(Applause).

>> What a night. It will come to an end.

(Laughter)

>> But not just yet!

>> But not yet. George, those were beautiful words. And it's not going to come to an end in part because Andy, we have a little something for you. So please come up here.

Andy, we are so, so glad that you are leading AUCD. And we didn't know your preference for technology, but what we did know is that we wanted him to have the very best!

(Laughter)

(Laughter)

So he has it. You know, I think that it's a tribute to George that we had so many amazing candidates for the job that Andy now fills. Those of you who had the chance to hear Andy today, I heard him at the director's meeting and at legislative affairs. I mean, my goodness. I actually got goose‑bumps, and with his vision, and his sense that we can accomplish more, even more than we have. So we are truly fortunate. And so I get to propose a toast. First, to Andy. And so raise whatever you have. If you've got wine, you're lucky.

(Laughter)

If you've got coffee, if you've got water, raise that. So to Andy. We are so pleased to have you. And we look forward to our exciting future together with you. Here, here!

(Applause).

And then let's end the evening with a toast to George. George, we love you. We will miss you. We wish you all of the best. And you are out of this world. To George!

(Cheers and applause).

Okay, Performance Measure, let's wrap it up!

>> So we're going to end with a sing‑along. We are singing to George. And knowing this group's abilities, we're going to do this ‑‑ I picked a song as simple as possible. But I need to begin with a show of hand. How many people learned the song Go Tell Aunt Rhodie. Six of you. So I will sing it will next slide, please.

(Sing) go tell aunt Rhodie, the old gray goose is dead.

George is not the old gray goose. But here is the old gray goose!

(Cheers and applause).

So let's put the new lyric up. Go tell George Jesien, go tell George Jesien, go tell George Jesien you are out of this world. We're all going to see that once. And then it's the next slide which is women only. You will see the verse for women only. And then there will be a verse for men only. And then you will see us spreading out, and we're going to divide the room into fourths. And we're going to do it in rounds. It's just this same verse twice starting from that side, one at a time. You get the idea. So it's this verse. Everybody together. Women, and then men, and then the round. Very simple. We can do this!

So together with me, please. Everybody!

(Sing) go tell George Jesien.

Go tell George Jesien.

Go telling George Jesien you are out of this world.

(Singing).

>> Men?

(Sing) is very athletic. He is very athletic. He wrangled his Segway as nimble as a squirrel.

Now spread out!

(Singing)

Go tell George Jesien.

(Cheers and applause)

(End of Celebration Dinner)