

Stephen J. Allen



Give to Others, and You Will Receive Tenfold in Return

It takes only a brief conversation with Steve for one to discover his passion for the pharmacy profession and for patient care. Steve has translated his passion into action, leading the development of many notable American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Foundation programs and resources. The ASHP Research and Education Foundation is the philanthropic arm of ASHP and its mission is to improve the health and well-being of patients in health systems through appropriate, safe, and effective medication use.

Steve is currently the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President of the ASHP Research and Education Foundation. He received his bachelor of science degree in pharmacy from the University of Rhode Island and a master's degree in hospital pharmacy from the University of Maryland. Steve completed a residency in hospital pharmacy practice at University of Maryland. He is a fellow of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

Steve's advice to young pharmacists is: *keep in mind that whatever you invest in this profession of pharmacy, it will likely return to you in tenfold benefits.*



Dear Young Pharmacist,

What a great choice you have made! It has been more than 40 years since I made the decision to select pharmacy as my profession, and I can unequivocally say it was the best

decision of my life. You must invest in your profession to reap the rewards, and my letter will speak to your investment in pharmacy and the personal payback that will come with it.

It is essential to me to have balance and connection between my personal and professional life. I was blessed to have a wonderfully loving family who instilled great values in me. My grandmother was particularly influential in my life. She was a woman of few words, but when she spoke she always had something very important to say. I recall her saying something along the lines of “give to others and you will receive tenfold in return.” This adage has been at the heart of my focus in life and in my professional endeavors.

Let’s face it, college, career, and life can be extremely competitive, but only if you insist on making it that way. It is important to be driven and have a life plan to guide you, but the beauty of life is to enjoy it with others and to experience the sense of accomplishment together.

My experiences as captain of a sports team, president of a fraternity, and a senior resident made me realize that a team of diverse individuals all moving toward the same goal was much better than a disparate group of folks striving for individual accomplishments. I determined that my professional focus would be best suited to lead a pharmacy team. To be a great pharmacist, it is essential to embrace leadership as a professional responsibility because you must lead on your patients’ behalf; lead when working with nurses, physicians, and other health professionals to manage drug therapy; and lead your personal, professional journey.

So, can you imagine being 24 years old and your first job after completing a residency is assistant director of pharmacy in a children’s hospital in Washington, DC, with staff representing almost every nationality reporting to you? Well, this long-haired, lily-white, young, residency-trained, hot shot was disdained by most of this extremely diverse staff. I was overwhelmed, constantly challenged, and quickly becoming worn down. Had I made a huge mistake? Could I handle the pressure? Did I believe in myself that I could be successful? Ultimately, after several nerve-racking months, I resorted to focusing on my core values of giving my best and believing that it would pay dividends—and indeed it did! I focused on serving patients with the utmost quality, respecting each individual’s important contribution to the pharmacy team, and being totally honest and demonstrating integrity in all that I did. Guess what? It paid off ten times over. I became the Director of