

The Warm, the Proud, the Terrified
Christopher Kilmartin, President Elect

At the recent APA Convention in San Francisco, following the Division 51 “business” meeting, someone made the suggestion that we should take a photo of all of the Division’s past Presidents in attendance. Even though I was a future President at the moment (In fact, I still am for a few more weeks), I was invited to join the 7 attending past Presidents and current President Mark Stevens for a “photo-op,” and program chair Chen Oren emailed the picture a few weeks later.

I had a few reactions to the photo. First was a feeling of warmth. Without exception, everyone in the picture is a really nice guy. Second was pride. I am honored to join this group. But third were feelings of mild dread and significant humility. How am I going to walk in the footsteps of these men? All possess exceptional intellects, and all were insightful leaders of the Division. The last time I did any administrative work was as Unit Coordinator at the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents in Rockville, MD, 1983-86. Okay, maybe that’s a little bit of an exaggeration; I’ve chaired a few committees. But mainly I have avoided being chair of my department or in any way taking on the tasks of running an organization of any size. And anyone who knows me well knows that humility is not my long suit, but I experience it in spades when I look at this photo.

I hope that the revelation of this relative lack of experience does not cause some of you to think that perhaps you voted for the wrong person. I am not one to shy away from new challenges and hope that, by this time next year, I will have helped the Division progress by metaphorically standing on the shoulders of those who held the office before me. (I thought about literally standing on their shoulders, but they’re a bunch of middle-aged men whose cheerleader pyramid days are probably long over.)

All this is to say that I would like your help. I certainly do not have all the answers, and in many cases, I don’t even know the right questions. So if you have any thoughts or suggestions about anything regarding the direction of the division, I would like to hear them.

My major focus this year is to emphasize our common ground with women: to continue to build bridges between our Division and Division 35 (Psychology of Women), to further address the issue of men’s violence, both against women and against other men, and to amplify women’s voices within the Division. But this agenda is not a unitary one by any means. I am open to suggestions and I want to harness the considerable creativity of our membership.

And, I would like to publicly recognize the remarkable leadership of Mark Stevens as Division 51 President for 2007. Not only has he accomplished a great deal,

he has also paid close attention to helping me to prepare to do my job next year.
Thanks for all of your hard work, Mark. I'll be calling you often in 2008.