

February 22, 2022

Dear fellow AFS-FHS members,

The twenty-second day of the second month of 2022 is a great opportunity to provide a mid-year update as Section president. As part of the commemoration of our 50 years as a Section, I have enjoyed working with 12 members to profile their connection to fish health. These 12 members listed a total of 37 other people that have positively influenced their career development. Indeed, interaction with colleagues is one of the most important benefits of Section membership. The 12 profiles have ranged from charter member Bob Summerfelt, who joined in 1972, to new member Jake Veilleux, who joined just days before we published his profile.

One of the biggest challenges in leading a volunteer organization is recruiting people to place their name on the ballot during the annual elections. We are all busy, but serving in an elected position has benefits beyond mere membership. For me, that includes **support from colleagues during turbulent times**.

In 2015, I was elected to serve on the FHS Professional Standards Committee, where I also served as Chair from 2016 - 2018. Little did I know what unique benefit that opportunity would provide...

During an investigative journalism story on national TV October 14, 2017, a colleague [who is not a veterinarian or a certified FHS professional] accused me of having a conflict of interest that impacted the reliability of my work. My director immediately removed me from my role as the lead pathologist for our world-leading farm salmon disease surveillance program. The Premier of British Columbia—after a week of scrutiny from the media and the opposition party—ordered a \$100,000 independent review of the veterinary diagnostic laboratory where I work (the BC Animal Health Centre, AHC). During this potentially traumatic time, my mental health was supported because I could inform my superiors and the independent reviewers that I was the elected Chair of the Professional Standards Committee of the Fish Health Section. I was confident that support from fish health professionals trumped the accusation.

The external review agreed: “Our independent assessment of the AHC did not identify any evidence of financial or technical conflict of interest...” Now, more than four years later, my role as lead pathologist has not been restored, but I take comfort in that my FHS colleagues had confidence in my integrity while I finished my term as Chair of the Professional Standards Committee in 2018. That confidence was bolstered in 2019, when I was elected to the FHS leadership series that now has me serving as president.

While my situation might be unusual, not unusual is the need for fish health professionals to provide reliable diagnostic information to decision-makers. When our advice is contrary to the final decision, or when we face false accusations, we can be confident that our Fish Health Section colleagues will support us.

Our annual officer election season is coming soon, but only FHS members can vote. My advice: if not a member, join; if nominated to run for office, run; if elected, serve with enthusiasm.

This year’s FHS committees are progressing on Blue Book revisions, review of the Bylaws and Procedural Manual, preparations for ISAAH-9 in Santiago, and many other activities.

In closing, I acknowledge that pandemic limits on gatherings have strained our mental health and relationships. I encourage each person reading this message to think about someone that has had a

positive influence on your career—maybe someone that you haven't contacted in a while. Send that person a note of thanks and see how they respond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary D. Marty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G".

Gary D. Marty

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