

LEGACY OF 1979 . . . JAN MARGOLIS IN RETROSPECT



At year's end we are often drawn into looking back and considering a fitting post-log of events. And, since 1979 coincidentally marks the end of a turbulent decade for America, the tendency toward reflection is perhaps even stronger. It should be obvious to even the most casual participant in our field, that ASTD is advancing into the '80s as what Malcolm Knowles has called ". . . the most vital professional organization in the entire field of adult education."

During the past year, ASTD activities received a variety of national media exposure, including coverage in *U.S. News and World Report*, *Business Week*, many major-city newspapers, as well as on several national public radio programs. Various educational and research organizations began looking to ASTD for leadership and support in critical national HRD issues. These groups included; American Council on Education, American Association for Higher Education, American Vocational Association, the Conference Board, American Management Associations, National Society for Per-

formance and Instruction, and many others.

On a Global Scale . . .

Internationally, ASTD has encouraged the development of HRD associations in other countries, serving as Secretariat for the International Federation of Training and Development Organizations (IFTDO), an organization of associations such as ours from more than 30 countries.

As we are all aware, the seventies witnessed not only the decline of America's power and prestige, but a renewal of anti-American sentiment. Yet, throughout the decade, the stature of our associa-

tion has increased on a global scale. Much of our association's standing in the world HRD community is a reflection on our "ambassadors" abroad: Darius Van Fossen, ASTD general manager and IFTDO executive director; Jackie Geib, IFTDO Secretariat administrative assistant; and Leo Hauser, Vince Miller and Dick Marcotte, all ASTD representatives to the IFTDO Council during past years.

The National ASTD Board of Directors recently voted to renew our pledge to international leadership, through the funding of the IFTDO Secretariat at our headquarters office in Madison through 1980. The Board also approved the addition of another staff member to assist in IFTDO administration.

Sorting Out Priorities . . .

1979 was a year of synthesis . . . a time of sorting out our priorities and framing our national agenda.

By 1979, we had grown to a size (17,500 national members) and a budget (\$2.5 million) which strained our management and information systems. More than 4,500

Managers of the HRD function face many of the same demands as other managers; however, they have additional pressures and responsibilities that require special attention.

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STAFFED by Geoffrey M. Bellman, President, GMB Associates, and Michael Di Lorenzo, President MJD Associates.

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inquiries were processed this year by ASTD's Training Resources Center. Membership representation extended throughout 80 countries. Our Division network grew from one at the start of the decade to six at the close, including our newest, the Career Development Division. Chapters grew from 76 in 1970 to 113 in 1979, with the number of ASTD National committees and task forces increasing threefold.

During 1979, we saw our publishing program double, with 26 new additions, bringing the total to 41 HRD publications offered. In a new area of member service, an exclusive rental car discount program and a group insurance plan were launched.

Recognizing that service to our rapidly growing chapter network needed strengthening, Vida Stanius, former assistant dean, College of Education, Kansas State University, was brought on board as our member/chapter services director. She immediately began the process of rebuilding chapter services by consolidating our chapter newsletter, providing a money-saving tax exemption guide, expanding the Society's Chapter Development Program and initiating our "Check Us Out" membership campaign.

Recognizing that our mode of providing professional development opportunities for members needed strengthening as well as a fresh conception of what professional development in our rapidly expanding HRD field is all about, Mac McCullough, former director of Training, U.S. Civil Service Commission, was added to the ASTD staff. After conducting extensive research and talking with literally hundreds of practitioners, Mac and our Professional Development Committee developed an 18-month action plan designed to place ASTD more significantly on the map as the quality resource for gaining competency and perspectives in the HRD field.

Further, Roy Walters led in the formation of a *Training and Development Journal* Editorial Advisory Board, designed to assist editorial staff efforts to continually

improve the overall quality and professionalism of the publication. Results of Advisory Board efforts, coupled with the addition of two new staff members have been evidenced since the landmark May (1979) special issue focusing on Professional Development.

Research also received continuing attention. Our Second Annual Invitational Research Seminar on Job Performance Standards and Measurements (led by Judy Springer) was very well received. Proceedings of this successful event will be published in early 1980. The concept of a National Academy for Training and Development was also developed and approved, with aims to provide an important vehicle for the most senior and experienced practitioners in our field to meet with one another as well as contribute not only to the continuing development of ASTD but to the HRD field as a whole.

The Society's Washington Office has grown from 1½ to 6 people, providing invaluable service to

members as a legislative watchdog. Working with a wide variety of groups, including Congress, universities, professional and educational associations, and industry, their efforts are aimed at stimulating closer and clearer linkages between the world of education and the realities of working life.

Strength, Vitality, Maturity . . .

As the year ahead unfolds, 1980 will mark the passage of our association into its 36th year. And as in our individual lives, one tends to experience the late 30's as years of great strength, vitality, maturity and concern for contributions. So it will be for ASTD, because we have, indeed, come of age.

We can no longer portend to service the whole of the HRD field. It is too vast a task. Limits must be set so that resources can be effectively allocated and energy can be targeted toward significant, specified results, rather than activities which are difficult to trace to targeted ends. A strategic plan, reviewed by the National Board in December, recognizes our

strengths as well as our limitations (the Strategic Planning Group has been led by John Zimmerman of Kepner-Tregoe's Princeton Strategy Group).

The 1979 ASTD "team" has much to be proud of. It helped establish frameworks for strategic planning and action. It has synthesized issues so they can be dealt with creatively and openly. It has developed a highly competent and dedicated staff and volunteer structure. But in many ways, it is the 1980 "team" that will be faced with truly "critical choices" . . . choices that reflect on our growing position in HRD world events; in national issues; in the scope and depth of our professional development thrust. . . . In short, in shaping the focus and scope of the ASTD for the '80s.

The 1980 Board, committee and chapter team promises to be on one of the most astute groups of professionals ever assembled. . . . We wish them well and look forward to their continuing leadership and collegiality during the year ahead. — *Jan Margolis*

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