

The Endowment Fund: Making a Difference in the Future of ASHS

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The speaker looked out over the audience, and a good crowd was on hand, must have been a hundred or more, really good for an ASHS session. He looked a little closer, expecting to see a lot of familiar faces, some of the ones he had been looking at for the last 40 or so years. However, few familiar faces were seen. He thought to himself: "Who are all these people?" Then the reality hit him: this is the future of ASHS.

This was my experience at the ASHS Annual Conference in Las Vegas. I was invited to speak on the topic "Aiming for tenure (and promotion)? How to get there" at the session "Growing Horticulturists: Being Successful in Your Career". That is why the room was filled with people I did not know. Sure, there were a couple of old timers there like me, including Curt Rom and Desmond Layne, but the old timers were few in number. But, that is just the way it should be.

These young people are the future of ASHS, not old Curt or Des or me. My message to young members or potential members is to make the most of ASHS membership. I feel pretty good after my 40 years of membership, having presented at many sessions, interacted with so many colleagues sharing ideas, served as ASHS president, been honored as a Fellow. ASHS has played a major role in my career.

I want ASHS to continue long after Curt, Des and I finish up. For that to happen, support of our future members is critical. That is where the ASHS Endowment Fund plays a significant role. Many of the young faces in the crowd that day in Las Vegas traveled on student travel grants paid from Endowment Fund income. I imagine that many would not have attended if not for travel support, and for many this attendance will likely lead to some becoming long-time members and for ASHS to be their home professional society.

I came home excited. And, I was excited enough to take out the checkbook and make a donation to the Endowment Fund. I ask all ASHS members to consider giving. The Fund is making a difference, many of you have seen it, I sure did that day in Las Vegas. The future is sitting out there before us, let's be sure to support it!