

## From the President's Desk August 2020

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Sometimes, even though wisdom passes right over your head you might somehow absorb it. For decades, I have walked under the Class of 1893 gate next to Houston Hall on the University of Pennsylvania campus not reading, and certainly not understanding, the Latin words *Inveniemus Viam Aut Faciemus*. In fact, it was only after my first *From the President's Desk* column was published, and I closed with these words: "If there is no road, cell and gene therapy professionals know how to build one," that I learned the translation of that Latin inscription. It is: "We will find a way or we will make one." Was it coincidence that the University President used that quote in her commencement address, or subliminal messaging and amazing recall from my 9<sup>th</sup> grade Latin class?

In 2020, we are traveling with strong headwinds due to the intense disruption and challenges of COVID19, physical, mental, and financial trauma that will be with us for some time. And yet we are, and must continue to be, resilient. The research and development, the clinical trials, the regulatory filings, and commercial manufacturing must go on for the sake of our patients. The work of ISCT continues and accelerates as the Society grows and science advances.

With that theme of continuity, on behalf of ISCT and *Telegraft* I would like to express gratitude for someone who has built many paths in uncharted territory. I knew of Nancy Collins when I joined ISCT (then International Society for Hematotherapy and Graft Engineering) in 2000. She was the Founding President of the Society. I got a sense for the character of the Society and Nancy at [my second Annual Meeting in Quebec City in 2001](#). We had great translational cell therapy science by day. Then, there was a "gala" in a cavernous reception hall with dinner and music and, lo and behold, the former President of the Society was out on the dance floor all night.

How could you not love Nancy and admire her energy?



Nancy was co-editor of the Society's journals, the *Journal of Hematotherapy*, then *Cytotherapy*, from 1991 to 2002 and has been on the Editorial Board continuously since 1991. She was also a founding member of the Foundation for Accreditation of Cellular Therapy in 1995, served on the FACT Board of Directors for 14 years, and was a FACT inspector for 19 years. Nancy has given back through so many avenues, including mentoring ISCT members and the Association for Women in Science. You can read more in the [tribute written by Carolyn Kever-Taylor](#) on the occasion of Nancy receiving the 2018 ISCT Career Achievement Award. Nancy has also been featured in *Talking With Giants*, a series of articles profiling leaders in our field. You can read the article featuring her [here](#).

In *Telegraft*, with an eye towards the future, Nancy introduced the Junior Associate Editor role and recruited Early Stage Professionals to the Editorial Board. She developed an Editorial Board charter, reformatted and updated the layout, increased the number of contributors, and expanded the Board to achieve global representation. With Nancy leading the way, *Telegraft* has increased coordination with *Cytotherapy* with joint publication of the *ISCT Talking With Giants* series, introduced featured member and leadership spotlight pieces, and empowered Russell Cruz to improve the social media presence and tracking through the From the Blogosphere series.

Two immensely talented Co-Editors, demonstrating our global presence, now lead *Telegraft*. Russell Cruz (Washington, DC USA) and Janet MacPherson (Sydney, Australia) now take the helm and lead *Telegraft* forward. As they do, we are immensely grateful to Nancy for her energy and passion and her legacy of contributions and imprint on so many aspects of ISCT. She exemplifies the spirit of collaboration and mentoring that is the essence of ISCT.

In these times of great uncertainty, we can take inspiration in her example.

When there is no road, build one.

We will find a way or we will make one.