

William L. Wilkie

On Books and Scholarship: Reflections of a Marketing Academic

[*Note*: I should begin with the honest admission that when Terry Clark contacted me about doing this essay, I experienced strong ambivalence. On the one hand, I *loved* his idea of this series of essays on books and scholarship. It serves a complementary purpose to the journal article, especially in offering the potential to bind our field's scholarship more tightly across time, training, and techniques. In so doing, it can also capture some human dimensions of what it means to pursue learning in the academic sphere of marketing and thus, beyond the information itself, might serve both aspirational and inspirational goals for us readers. So I was very positive about the concept and was flattered to be asked to contribute.

On the other hand, I personally have difficulty in writing on this subject, in overcoming feelings of being presumptuous (I do have some concern that publication practices are not sufficiently sensitive to personality differences among scholars in our field, so I have decided to be open about this right at the outset). My avoidance reaction is strong enough that I would have turned this down had I not recently been consulting Robert Bartels's (1988) classic *The History of Marketing Thought*. In its last edition, he had added 21 short invited essays to update developments and mentioned that four other invitees had opted not to participate. I was one of those four, and I didn't want this to happen again.

Then came the issues of what to say and how to say it, and the presumptuous feeling was looming strongly. At this time, I happened to begin Kurt Vonnegut's (1997) most recent book, *Timequake*, for leisure reading. I have always marveled at his capacity for almost instantaneously transporting me, as reader, from one convincing alternative reality into another, then another. Sometimes odd, certainly unconventional, but at almost every reading I come away recognizing some keen insights, and often with

humor. So came my hoped-for solution for this essay. To assist with structure, I've arranged the essay in three basic sections: (1) reflections on books during my path into marketing academia, (2) reflections on the role of institutional initiatives in sustaining the search for scholarship in our field, and (3) a few gentle reflections on personal motivations in seeking scholarship in the marketing field and the challenges we face together in this quest. Thus, though I make no effort to emulate Mr. Vonnegut directly (and with no suitable substitute for his frequent narrator, Kilgore Trout), please join me in hopping from one brief topic to another, searching for insights, occasionally with humor.]

On Becoming a Marketing Academic: Recollections

"You Can Major in Anything but Business, Son"

With that explicit sentiment, my parents sent me off to college and the path for my future. I happened to enter Notre Dame the year it instituted an experimental "Freshman Year of Studies," in which young learners were to be encouraged to explore the length and breadth of the university setting. I was one who certainly took up this option, managing to change my "intent to major" several times, from science math (a deep but possibly too-confining curriculum) to liberal arts math (a strange, interesting offering in which we spent six weeks exploring "What is a point?" before moving onto another month on "What is a line?") to English (Might I have the soul of a poet? I don't think so, according to the feedback in the special seminar taught by the university's Poet in Residence—who also provided our class, several of whom are now highly regarded writers, a glimpse of the insensitivity possible within college humanities departments). During this sojourn I somehow enrolled in a course in the forbidden field: Business in Society, offered by the Dean of the Business School to nonmajors. The Dean, James Culliton, was a former Harvard marketing professor possessed of creative mind and innovative spirit (though his name is not well known these days, you'll find Neil Borden [1964] crediting him with inspiring the concept for the "marketing mix" at the start of that classic article and E. Jerome McCarthy [1960] also crediting him for inspiring the "4 P's" in McCarthy's ground-breaking text). In my case, among his course readings were several paperback books by Frederick Lewis Allen—*Only Yesterday* and *The Big Change* are two titles I recall—that presented business history in a manner that absolutely captivated me. In fact, until writing this essay I had, in the naively egocentric manner of

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an early college student, simply assumed that these were undiscovered gems. I was shocked when I recently looked them up and found in the Foreword to *The Big Change* (Allen 1952, pp. vii–viii), written by famed historian Richard Hofstadter, “For over twenty years [Allen’s writings] have been among the most popular books ... in American colleges.... [*The Big Change*’s] seductive facility ... [lures] the minds of many students ... outward from the classroom ... toward a broader interest in the study of man.” At any rate, this sent me over to the College of Business, where the first open faculty office happened to be occupied by the aforementioned Jerry McCarthy, who encouraged me to “Try my class in marketing,” as well as the new minor in “management science” that he was developing with John Kennedy. This would enable me to pursue more depth in mathematics, as I had wished, albeit in a more applied form. About 20 strong students enrolled in this minor: We were encouraged to read and undertake research by the Notre Dame faculty, and 7 of us went directly on to doctoral study, including two of my present colleagues, Joe Guiltinan and Bob Dreves.

Of course, I did not realize until much later that I was participating in the cusp of a revolution in business academics—that McCarthy’s text, along with Kotler’s (1967) a few years later, would help alter marketing thought in fundamentally important ways, toward a managerial, decision-making focus. Among other influences on me during this period was another text written at Notre Dame, Edgar Crane’s (1965) *Marketing Communications*. Crane was a Stanford Ph.D. in communications who had studied under Nathan Maccoby—which thus brought me into contact with the Hovland/Yale School communications research tradition—and Leon Festinger, who had only recently been working on his concepts for cognitive dissonance. Crane also inserted capsule research study descriptions throughout his book, a device that I, as an undergraduate student, found marvelously interesting. Finally, I should mention Boyd and Westfall’s (1964) *Marketing Research*, as the mere fact that I knew Harper Boyd’s name made me feel more comfortable in choosing Stanford for graduate school, where I was honored to get to know this talented man. A little later, Jerry Zaltman’s (1965) early book on consumer behavior, as well as Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell’s (1968) *Consumer Behavior* provided important overall frameworks for my choosing this direction for a field of study, and Howard and Sheth’s (1969) *The Theory of Buyer Behavior* provided confidence and impetus for undertaking research studies that would fit comfortably within a larger marketing context. I’m also sure that when I undertook to create my own textbook, *Consumer Behavior*, some years later (Wilkie 1986), all these sources played a significant role.

In writing this, I deliberately chose to limit the range of books mentioned, because I’ve come to recognize the parallel significance of the people who were involved (including two of my current colleagues, Jack Kennedy and Yu Furuhashi at Notre Dame, and George Day, Mike Ray, and other superb faculty members at Stanford, who had huge impacts on me, my thinking, and directions I’ve taken) and the larger educational context within which this was taking place. While a book certainly can have a powerful singular

impact, people and contexts also are crucial, a point I want to retain through the remainder of this piece.

Now I’m Wondering, Can Weak Eyesight Lead to Strong Vision?

I’ve quite enjoyed reading the previous essays in this series, especially when I’ve found points of personal connection I hadn’t realized existed. For example, Len Berry’s (1998) discussion of producing books tapped similar sentiments in me, as did much of Morris Holbrook’s (1998) discourse—my interactions with Morris over the years have always seemed to tap into some worldviews we hold in common. One element, though, really came as a surprise. Stanley Hollander (1998) mentioned ophthalmic problems in later adulthood, and then Morris described weak eyesight in childhood, having specifically to undertake corrective eye-strengthening exercises each evening using his toothbrush. I had this very same problem, though in my case the exercises were each morning and evening, using a special card that I extended from between my eyes, striving to bring the three colored dots progressively into focus. I thought this an interesting, likely rare coincidence, until I mentioned it to a coauthor (who refuses to allow me to use her name) who volunteered that she too had experienced this as a child. I was startled by this and mentioned it to Joel Cohen, who said that he *too* had had this childhood condition. Now, one attribute I see in common within this group is exceptional academic “vision.” Although I’m not ready to claim any causal links yet, I do wonder whether this is just a common childhood malady and I had never realized it or whether there could be some other factor at work. Maybe we should have a society for weakly focused thinkers (we could call it “SWFT”) within the field.

“Who Is This Guy Levine?”

Over the years, certain elements have evolved that I try to apply to my teaching, regardless of course level or topic, as well as to my research. One of these is the acronym SFK, which now appears prominently on the first page of each syllabus, just below RFM and above ALE. No explanation is provided, but there is plenty of white space for note-taking on the first class day. Surprisingly, this does seem to provide a useful platform for taking up “search for knowledge” at various points in the course (in case you’re curious, RFM stands for “read for mastery,” a goal I try to insist my students work on prior to coming to each class meeting, while ALE refers to “affirmative learning environment,” which I now insist must be supported by every student as a condition of staying in the course. Although I was slightly embarrassed at resorting to these acronyms a few years ago, I’ve been surprised at how well they’ve been received, particularly by the MBAs who drove me to invoke them in the first place!). One point I make with SFK is that at times reading a book isn’t quite enough, particularly when a person’s grasp of a field’s specialized language isn’t yet developed, and that *asking questions can also be an excellent means of seeking knowledge and clarifying understanding*. I tell students in each class that they need not feel embarrassed—that I personally hold the world’s record for most embarrassing question and that they won’t be able to come close to breaking it. By the time I finish telling the story (complete with writhing, second-by-second memories of my pain), they are

loose, laughing, and looking on their hapless professor with actual sympathy. More important, they're much more comfortable about asking questions. I'll share this painful tale with you now, in highly abbreviated fashion.

The trouble started about four minutes into my graduate school career, in a business school seminar on group behavior, with students from various fields. The professor was a world-famous psychologist. I had taken limited psychology courses as an undergraduate and knew my preparation was weak. I was determined to work hard and learn much. The professor began the class by recounting great contributions to the field—James, then Freud—and all the while my pencil was moving speedily, taking notes on these gems of wisdom, most of whom were generally familiar to me. Then the professor moved from Freud to Levine. I kept writing but was bothered by the realization that I had never heard of this great scholar. I looked for signals from the professor: Was this Levine actually prominent? Oh, yes, it was clear the professor thought so, probably more than Freud even. I continued writing, but my thoughts were turning to my personal situation: “*I clearly don't belong in this course. We're four minutes in, and I don't know what we're talking about!*” I risked a look around. My seminar mates were all writing but were relaxed, looking cool, maybe even a little bored. The professor was excited; he obviously loved this Levine's contributions. “*Maybe I shouldn't be in the doctoral program.... Yes, this probably was a huge mistake. I shouldn't be at Stanford, and I shouldn't be after a Ph.D.*” I began to consider my options: I had a military deferment at the time, but maybe that would be a better choice. “*This is terrible....*”

I then did something that still amazes me, and I think I did it without a conscious thought. In the midst of angst, I threw up my hand! This stopped the professor in mid-sentence and directed all eyes in the room to me. I detected mild irritation at my interruption.

Professor: Yes?

Student: ... Um ...

Professor: What is it you want?

Student: Er ... I don't really know ... [At this point I detected much more irritation.]

Professor: Look, you stopped the class. You must want something.

Student: Well, I just haven't ever heard of Levine before.

Professor: Really? ... Really? ... Hmm, maybe you don't belong in this class.

Student: That's what I was thinking, too.

Professor: What's your name? What's your field?

Student: Wilkie. I'm in marketing. [At this point I hear titters of amusement.]

Professor: Well Mr. Wilkie, what's your question? [I now realize I still don't have one ready.]

Student: ... Er ... Who is this guy Levine? [Oh no, I just called him “this guy!”]

Professor: That's what I was just talking about. What do you want to know?

Student: ... Um ... Er ... What's his first name? [Oh, great question! That should help a lot!]

Professor: Kurt ... K-u-r-t ... Levine ... L-e-w-i-n.

Student: [The light dawned; the sun began to shine again.] Kurt Lewin ... Kurt Lewin! Oh, I've heard of him.

Professor: Yes, Americans sometimes mispronounce his name, but in German the “w” is pronounced as a “v.” He's about given up. Can we move on now, Mr. Wilkie?

Student: Yes, sir. Thank you. [Whew!! That was embarrassing, but I'm back in the program!]

At this point, I was deep red with embarrassment and kept my eyes glued to my notebook as I systematically began to erase and replace the “Levines” I had written. After a bit, I risked a glance at my seminar mates to see if I was still the center of scornful attention. Much to my amazement (and, many years later, still to my deepest sense of pleasure), I saw that all but one of them was also busily erasing and replacing! When I glanced to the professor with puzzlement in my eyes, he was looking at me with something that resembled a smile, and I think I saw a quick wink (I never have been quite sure).

So one challenge I see us all facing is how to properly value and handle the idea of personal ignorance, given our high-powered professional setting. If we think about it, an honest recognition of being ignorant is a real positive for us as academics, in that it can stimulate search and discovery. However, it's not easy to present this openly to a community ready to define it as a limiting weakness.

Within my courses, I try to convey to students that the better they are, the more they'll encounter moments of ignorance, as they come to perceive new possibilities and new frontiers. I call on them to celebrate that wonderful insight: “One mark of an educated person is to know what you don't know,” and I invoke the ALE acronym as a course characteristic to help them. As a marketing academic, though, I worry that our world doesn't handle this issue very well, and I wonder how costly this is in the longer run.

Standing in the Corner: My Most Memorable Job Interview

In another recollection related to this essay series and my earlier academic life, I was pleased to discover that Stanley Hollander had worked as a research assistant to Reavis Cox in preparing Vaile, Grether, and Cox's (1952) *Marketing in the American Economy*. Of all the earlier marketing books I've read, this has always been *by far* the most impressive to me—sweeping yet analytical and impressively principled. (When recently preparing our article “Marketing's Contributions to Society” (1999) for the special Millennium Issue of *Journal of Marketing*, Betsy Moore and I began by again consulting this very fine piece of work.)

This book also ties into my respect for the continuing power of marketing thinkers at Wharton over many years. This respect was cemented early in my career, when I presented a seminar there as part of an interview visit for an associate professor position. Perhaps because of my public policy topic, there was a large turnout in the seminar room. Lined up along the right side of the table were the giant names of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, including Reavis Cox (who was likely an emeritus professor then), while on my left side of the table were the giants of the 1970s and later years, including Paul Green, Ron Frank, Jerry Wind, Tom Robertson, and Scott Ward. As I recall, I had barely gotten into my talk when a spark (“Should objective

price-quality ratings correlate at 1.00 in our market system, and what if they don't?") set off a remarkable academic conflagration that flew back and forth across the large table. Sharply distinct priorities arose as to the issues, as well as obviously strong wills and love of debate and discourse.

I was quite enjoying being a spectator when I realized that a faculty position was at stake, and I'd better do something to get my talk back on track. I thought it might be humorous to turn off the overhead, leave the table, and go lean in the corner, so this is what I did. However, rather than inviting me to resume my talk, the participants just glanced at me and then went right back to their discussion! I don't recall today how or when I resumed my talk: I do know that overall I said very little and certainly didn't think I'd done well. Much to my surprise, a number of participants, including Reavis Cox, came up and congratulated me on my fine seminar! My dual lessons from that day: (1) It's really easy to *overestimate* your personal importance in an academic setting, and (2) never *underestimate* the value of passion on the part of leading contributors to academic thought. I can't think of another single episode in my career in which this was so admirably evident.

On Sustaining Scholarship: The Importance of Institutional Initiatives

[*Note:* Although scholarship is essentially a personal activity, academics also work within a larger context. In reflecting on my career, it is striking to realize how much I was affected by the contexts that enveloped my educational enterprise, some of which I was unaware of then and some of which I only dimly perceived. I've now come to believe that in our academic community, it is crucial that we appreciate the potentials of institutional initiatives for advancing scholarship. As my space is limited, I only briefly point to several examples and list books and publications for further pursuit by interested readers.]

Three Exemplary Efforts in Educating Educators

Lifelong learning brings personal growth and satisfaction. Directed faculty experiences, moreover, can bring broader change. My personal nominees for exemplary initiatives in faculty development are (1) the Ford Foundation's program to alter business education in the United States, (2) the Sloan Foundation's funding for participation in the Stanford-Sloan Program, and (3) the Sears-Roebuck Foundation's funding of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Federal Faculty Fellowship program for work in the public policy world of Washington. All three directly shaped my opportunities and experiences at formative periods in my professional life. I may simply be unaware, but I've seen nothing even remotely as impressive in recent years.

Relevant to the Ford Foundation initiative, given my parents' instructions, I cannot imagine that I would have opted to major in the business school had that new management science minor not been available. That minor, in turn, was directly the result of Jerry McCarthy's participation in a spe-

cial Ford Foundation program held at Harvard/Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This math program, moreover, was only a part of a much larger Foundation effort to bring science into business and ultimately to change the research agendas, doctoral educations, and teaching approaches of faculty members in U.S. business schools. The early portion, beginning in 1953, involved supporting experiments with changing programs at five selected schools: Carnegie, then Harvard, then Columbia, then University of Chicago, then Stanford. In the later 1950s, attention shifted to "trickle down" dissemination efforts, including Gordon and Howell's (1959) famous report and a large series of "new developments" faculty training seminars, held mostly at the chosen five schools during summers, in which more than 1500 faculty from 300 institutions were exposed to suggested changes. Of these, the Harvard/MIT Institute of Basic Mathematics for Application to Business was spectacularly successful. Here a select group of promising young business professors, including the aforementioned Jerry McCarthy of Notre Dame, were tutored deeply for a year by mathematics faculty, for the purpose of returning to their home universities to infuse this discipline into research and teaching. (I don't recall all the names of major researchers who attended, but I do know that two other participants included Frank Bass and Edgar Pessemier, who then went and built the extraordinary marketing doctoral enterprise of the 1960s and 1970s at Purdue, and incidentally provided me with my initial faculty position.) Overall, there's no question in my mind that even a casual tracing of the later contributions of the participants and their students would reveal a *huge impact* on the course of research in marketing, including especially the evolution of the *Journal of Marketing Research* and *Marketing Science*. Readers interested in learning more about this remarkable Ford Foundation undertaking will find a useful overview by Schlossman, Sedlack, and Wechsler (1987) and an interesting retrospective interview with Professor Howell (who taught me in a class in the Sloan Program, though I was again unaware of his activity in this sphere at the time) by Schmotter (1984).

My second nomination goes to Alfred Sloan, the man who built General Motors and supported major business education initiatives at MIT and Stanford, and perhaps elsewhere. By the 1950s, he had become seriously concerned that business faculty members had little experience with the perspectives and needs of top management and policymakers. As one step to help rectify this situation, he endowed six doctoral fellowships for ten years to provide this background through participation in the year-long Stanford-Sloan Executive Development Program, a sort of "finishing school" where firms sent promising executives ready to be moved to the top. Although I was only 22 years of age, the impact on me was major and long-lasting. Among the program's rigorous set of activities were MBA-style business courses; biweekly meetings with chiefs of major corporations; a two-week field trip to Washington and New York for meetings with national leaders; seminars on art, music, and world political developments; and golf outings (which were voluntary but, as in the business world, curiously useful).

Several years later, while an early faculty member at Purdue's Krannert School, I had the opportunity to take a

leave to participate in the Sears/AACSB program in Washington. Here, I served as the first in-house consultant on marketing research at the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC's) Bureau of Consumer Protection, setting off a working relationship with this agency that has gone on intermittently ever since. We also participated in a customized public policy seminar series run by the Brookings Institute for our business faculty group. This was similar to the Sloan field trip, in that we met with national leaders, but it was more extensive in time, coverage, and attention to policy-setting processes. The net result of these two experiences is hard for me to describe, but very strong. And though I still don't move easily within the corridors of power, I was able to see enough of them at formative stages to appreciate (1) how they generally operate and (2) that they deserve serious attention, study, and input from business academics.

The Pioneer Spirit: Helping New Fields Flourish

There's little in academia that can compare with the honest excitement felt by people engaged in pioneering efforts to advance promising areas of study. I've been fortunate—twice blessed, as it were—to have been present and involved in this respect for (1) the *consumer behavior* area and (2) the *marketing and public policy* area. Some of my points, moreover, will hold for other areas as well.

Advancing consumer research. In consumer behavior, one of the key developments was the founding of the Association for Consumer Research (ACR). (I still picture the informal evening meeting on the screened porch of the Lord Jeffrey Amherst Inn. It was clear that the first ACR conference was a smashing success; now where to hold the second? Montreal and Paris were early favorites. "Wait, what are we trying to do here?" The University of Maryland became the choice.) The field grew quickly: When I became ACR President in 1980, it already had well over 1000 members in some 20 nations, and about two-thirds of all marketing dissertations were being written on consumer behavior topics. The *Journal of Consumer Research* was by that point also well established: It had begun in 1973 as *Research in Consumer Behavior*, with Ron Frank as its first editor. (As an aside, I sometimes shake my head at the incredibly heavy workload given those of us from marketing on the original editorial board: While the entire board was balanced across the ten sponsoring fields, almost all submissions came from marketing, which led to very uneven assignments!) And the annual ACR conference had been healthy from the start. Thus, within only a few years, the essential infrastructure for a field of study—an association with newsletter, a journal, and a conference with a proceedings—had been created by the consumer behavior pioneers. Readers may wish to consult the reports on the founding of ACR (Kardes and Sujan 1995, pp. 545–63) and *Journal of Consumer Research* (Kardes and Sujan 1995, pp. 486–96) in the 25th Anniversary edition of *Advances in Consumer Research*.

Pursuing academic excellence: "The Florida Experiment."

[Note: I don't know of a written source, but this is a tale of initiative in scholarship that deserves to be documented in the annals of our field.]

In 2001, I was honored to receive the AMA's McGraw-Hill/Irwin Distinguished Marketing Educator Award and was asked in an interview to reflect on the "proudest or most memorable achievement over your career." This question absolutely stumped me at the time—I don't think I'd ever considered it before. Having no decent response, I at least did something intelligent: I asked for a day to think it over. When I did so, I kept coming back to my decision in 1974 to join Joel Cohen in going to the University of Florida to try to build an "academic center of excellence" for scholarship in consumer behavior. Joel and I didn't know each other extremely well but did share an idealistic streak involving scholarly pursuits and interests in both consumer behavior and public policy, and we realized that teaming up made a lot of sense. Joel had also invited Gordon Bechtel, a top-flight psychometrician, to join us, and I fondly recall many broad-ranging discussions with this gentleman scholar.

I should perhaps note that the Florida decision wasn't costless for me. That year there were several attractive job options available, including possibly staying at Harvard, returning to Purdue, possibly returning to Stanford (but now as a faculty member), and joining the powerful group at Wharton. I vividly recall how even my closest friends were shocked at my decision to opt for the "Florida experiment." However, as I hope will be clear by the end of this essay, the quest to strive for scholarship held a powerful allure for me, and at the root of the Florida effort was our belief that it did for many other academics as well. If so, the chance to pursue fine research and help develop a field of study (consumer behavior) ought to be sufficient to attract top young academics to what was already a good faculty at University of Florida. It was an exciting time, particularly because we were striving to help build the overall field of consumer behavior in parallel.

Our building process involved an extensive and continuing search for new faculty members who possessed an elusive combination of intelligence, deep research training, paradigm fit, conscientiousness, ego strength, teaching ability, research passion, and other traits that would someday hopefully translate into powerful and sustained contributions to knowledge. We were in some respects relentless—we built onto the Ph.D. program by converting some MBA electives to joint seminars (the MBA program at the time had few marketing majors) and emerged with an 11-seminar doctoral program that offered breadth, depth, and sophistication in research. The Florida workshops became increasingly hard-hitting explorations into importance of issue as well as excellence in theory and methods, plus capacity to engage in debate (as I relate later in this essay, these sessions clearly emblazoned memories—or scars?—on some candidates).

I can today find several missteps in our process, but I also realize that our original idealism was more than reinforced. I think I need only list some of our hires to make this point—in those first six or seven years Dipankar Chakravarti, John Lynch, Gabe Biehal, Wes Hutchinson, Joe Alba, and John Sherry were among those we brought to Florida (and into the consumer behavior field) for their first marketing faculty positions. Having amassed this array of talent, the next phase of the Florida tale then brought additional senior marketing talent (Rich Lutz, Alan Sawyer, Bart Weitz, and so on) and a broadening of the research focus.

For me, though, the crucial lesson lies in the beginnings and in the strength of the attraction of a vision of sheer scholarship to fine young academics. In institutional terms, in my view, the “Florida experiment” demonstrated clearly that it is not always best for a department (or college) to slavishly follow current academic conventions. Furthermore, I saw how this type of institutional initiative requires that key faculty members hold to strong academic values and have strong support by administrators who are willing to commit to knowledge development in business schools. Given length constraints, the only other point I’d like to leave with readers here is that it is a shame that Joel Cohen has never received the recognition he deserves for fostering and developing this institutional phenomenon and its now quarter century of contributions to thought in consumer behavior. I’ve often wondered why.

Participating in public policy: back to exploring “business and society.” Although macromarketing issues have a long history in our field, a parallel set of events to those for consumer behavior also occurred around 1970 for the study of marketing and public policy, albeit on a smaller scale. As noted previously, the Sears/AACSB Federal Faculty Fellowship program enabled me to pursue participation in public policy, as an in-house consultant to the Bureau of Consumer Protection at the FTC. Given the importance of the policy domain for such research, one initiative I’m pleased to have helped create (along with Commissioners Mary Gardiner Jones, Murray Silverman, and David Gardner) was a set of rotating FTC consultancies for visiting marketing academics, who would then return to their universities to build on these experiences. In our case, I recall how pleased and proud I was when Hal Kassarian agreed to be my replacement and Neil Beckwith agreed to replace Dave: We had found two terrific people to carry the program forward. During the ensuing years, some 30 academics participated, leading to dissertations and growth of the area. After the program died during the deregulatory era of the 1980s, several of us teamed with FTC Commissioner Andrew Strenio and others to revive it for the 1990s (for an interesting overview of this initiative, see Murphy 1990).

Though still much smaller than consumer behavior, this subfield, now broadened as “marketing and society,” has been flourishing in recent years. It now also has a sustaining infrastructure consisting of several journals, several associations, and several related conferences. Rather than delve into detail here, let me highly recommend an informative set of short retrospectives on the development of this area in the Spring 1997 issue of *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* (Andreasen 1997; Bloom 1997; Greyser 1997; Kinnear 1997; Mazis 1997; Wilkie 1997), as well as an excellent long-term perspective provided by Hollander, Keep, and Dickinson (1999). Readers might also benefit from Murphy and Wilkie’s (1990) book, which presents history and institutional insights from experts on regulation; *Handbook of Research on Marketing and Society* (Bloom and Gundlach 2001), which offers many research overviews; and Wilkie and Moore’s (2002) chapter in *The Handbook of Marketing*, which provides an overview of this area. For myself, participation in these activities has enabled me to return to and pursue some of the issues that had first caught my interest as a college freshman.

Magical Moments in Marketing

On the basis of my experiences, I would also praise three mainstream marketing initiatives as notable efforts to create and sustain scholarship in our field: (1) the creation of the Marketing Science Institute (MSI), (2) the AMA Task Force on Developing Marketing Thought, and (3) the recent Special Millennium Issue of *Journal of Marketing*. Again, I’ll note each briefly and advocate that original sources be pursued.

Marketing Science Institute is in many respects our field’s “think tank”—what a wonderful concept and organization! I was privileged to serve as MSI’s Visiting Research Professor for one year (1973–74), followed by a long, cordial, and productive relationship over the ensuing years. Although the early years, when MSI was first affiliated with Wharton and then moved to Harvard, had their ups and downs (see also George Fisk’s [1999] and Paul Green’s [2001] essays in this series), the institute was embarking on its long run of success under Bob Buzzell and Steve Greyser when I was there. My purpose here, however, is to focus on the concept on which MSI is founded and the mission it serves, as a bridge between the best of the worlds of academia and business. Its sponsors include some 70 of the most sophisticated national and global firms, and its rotating academic leadership has tapped many of marketing’s most impressive academics. It is a place where theory and application are each promoted and where all parties respect the role that knowledge, thought, and research can play in marketing. Paul Bloom’s (1986) book provides an interesting foray into earlier contributions MSI has made to the field, and the MSI Web site (www.msi.org) offers handy information on the roster of current offerings and activities.

Broad efforts to ask who we are and where we’re going can be highly enriching experiences for a field of study, and my other nominations fit this description. Several knowledge-development task forces have been convened by the AMA—multiyear undertakings with a broad mandate to investigate the development and dissemination of marketing knowledge and with an eye to proposing useful initiatives. I served on the latest of these, convened in the mid-1980s by Steve Brown and Len Berry of the AMA, with Kent Monroe at its head and a motley crew of task force members having disparate backgrounds and views. It seemed to take a long time to attain a group comfort level, but after that point it became a terrifically rich and productive experience. My only regret for that task force is that our report was intended as an interim document showing the progress we were making. Upon submitting the report, however, we were thanked and terminated! I’ve always thought that our contributions were limited by that action, an unfortunate outcome. The report, however, is itself worthwhile and should be a basic reading for every academic in the field, whether he or she agrees or not. It appears as an article in the October 1988 issue of *Journal of Marketing* (AMA Task Force 1988), accompanied by invited commentaries (the previous AMA Task Force report by Myers, Massy, and Greyser [1980] is also worth consulting).

Recently, we have seen another undertaking in the same spirit, the Special Millennium Issue of *Journal of Marketing*, sent out as a fifth issue in late 1999. Underwritten by MSI, this effort complemented the traditional knowledge production process by (1) posing only a few key questions to scholars and inviting short proposals on how they might

be answered in new ways; (2) giving a positive reception to certain proposals, thus encouraging “developmental articles” to begin; (3) providing further feedback and encouragement to some of the articles as they were developing; and (4) offering the results in a special issue. In my case, this approach (a staged removal of publication risk, along with positive feedback and encouragement) enabled me and my coauthor (who was untenured at the time) to take on a large, multiyear investigation on marketing’s contributions to society (Wilkie and Moore 1999) that I would absolutely never have considered doing under typical journal publishing conditions. *My purpose in raising this is to point to the entirely affirmative scholarly concept embodied in this journal initiative*—one that identified key issues and supported addressing them through new ventures in scholarship. As a long-time academic in marketing, I was pleased and enthused at being able to participate, and I want to salute Bob Lusch (who, as *JM* editor, pushed for this to happen) and Dave Montgomery and George Day (who, as former heads of MSI, both elicited its support and served as designers and editors for the issue). In addition to the Special Issue itself, readers may wish to consult Roger Kerin’s (1996) review of the history of *Journal of Marketing* and George Day’s (1996) commentary for background.

Increasing Institutional Impediments: “Four, Three ... Tell Me, ‘Who Are We?’”

[*Note:* Up to this point, the section has been wonderful to write, but I feel compelled to note that not all institutional initiatives in our field have been constructive for scholarship, and this situation may be worsening. A moment to pursue the question of self-identity is surely in order, but I feel the need to approach this topic with stealth, so let’s take on the second part of the title first.]

I’ve always been interested in sports and grew up with football as played in Western Pennsylvania, then at Notre Dame. “Gritty, grimy, punishing” are terms that come to mind. Football on the West Coast, however, though every bit the equal in quality, is somehow quite different in spirit. For example, the chant in the title was part of a student offering (possibly only at a single game) by a group at Stanford that had won a contest to conduct a cheer. It was done to a rhythmic drum beat, counting by twos (“One, two, tell me, who are you?” and each time, the crowd answered in time to the beat, “Stan-ford! Stan-ford!”), up to ten, then back down again (our phrase in the title is thus near the end of the cheer, with the same crowd answer). I’ve never forgotten it. Watching the crowd increasingly join in, hearing its force on repetitions, and noting the assurance of the simple response, I thought it would be worth sharing, because these conditions surely *don’t* pertain to the institution of marketing academia today. We’d be better off, though, if we had a good short answer, and if we agreed on it, and if we were willing to shout it out. Do we, do we, and are we?

Whatever one’s proclivities here, marketing’s status as an applied field of study brings with it a number of anomalies within a university setting. I hadn’t fully appreciated how serious this issue is becoming, though, until a few years ago when I found myself sitting on an invited panel at an AMA conference without a very clear picture of my role. The topic, “Tomorrow’s Marketing Professors,” had drawn

an audience lining the walls of the large room. My three fellow panelists were noted researchers; in addition, each had served as editor of one of our “Big 3” journals, and each had served or was currently serving in an important administrative capacity at his or her school. Except that the others taught at public universities and I taught at a private school, I didn’t understand what I could add to the session, so I offered to go last (when your last name starts with “W,” this is a familiar enough position in the scheme of things). As the session unfolded, though, I began to see with pristine clarity what I wanted to say.

In brief, each speaker stressed the challenges facing business education as the turn of the century neared, as well as solutions that would require adjustments from faculty members in the future. These included (1) corporate partnerships with business schools, demanding deliverables in the form of value-added research for the business; (2) accountability to our constituents, demanding quantitative demonstrations of the value of our production, together with outside audits to document teaching loads, time spent on campus, advising students, and so forth; (3) research funding, demanding increased relevance at all stages (“corporate sponsors will desire applications and executive education programming”); (4) tenure being under increasing review and in danger of being abolished (as an aside, a *Business-Week* commentary around that time, titled “Tenure: An Idea Whose Time Has Gone,” opened with a vignette of a dean of a leading business school reacting to news of several schools that were considering abolishing tenure by pumping his arm and giving a whooping “holler of joy”; Leonhardt 1996); (5) technology driving changes in educational delivery; and (6) marketing losing its franchise to other business school areas.

Now, I’ll admit that my comments were a bit intemperate. I wish to acknowledge that the other panelists had spoken the truth: These *are* real and difficult issues. Furthermore, the speakers themselves likely didn’t endorse all these changes, such as moves against tenure. However, it irked me that in the entire session, as in outside world discussions of these issues, there had been simply no mention of scholarship at all (fortunately, as all three speakers are accomplished scholars, it was clear that the missing mention of scholarship was a property of the issues involved and not of any personal shortcomings of theirs, in my view). Moreover, it was clear that faculty members were not being pictured as having much useful input to either the discussion or future decisions as to directions for business education. Somehow in these discussions, “the faculty” sounds more and more to be a group of recalcitrant employees who don’t quite “get it,” rather than highly intelligent, conscientious, and accomplished professionals pursuing the highest goals of the academy. I went on to say that though the groups mentioned surely are “constituencies”; this does not and should not reduce us faculty members to some secondary role in which we are first to be instructed in the new purposes of the modern university and then marched out to implement orders.

My basic position is (was) that we faculty are developers and disseminators of knowledge. We are stewards of universities and their roles in society. Throughout modern history, universities have been beacons of light in troubled worlds, serving as fonts from which the future unfolded in

terms of science, technology, and significantly liberating worldviews, as well as producing an increasingly educated populace. Within the context of the professional business school, the faculty members should be asserting their visions for the central themes and thrust of each institution and should (in my view) never need to debate being placed in subordinate roles as their institution attempts to seize change opportunities.

My comments that day were much in the spirit of the remarks that the distinguished management educator James March (1996) later made to the Stanford business faculty on the occasion of his retirement—I wish I had known of them at the time I spoke, as I clearly would have been more persuasive. March began his talk by characterizing the guiding rationale for modern business schools, as with the social sciences generally, as in the “consequentialist” tradition. Here, “action is seen as choice, and choice is seen as driven by anticipations, incentives, and desires” (March 1996, p. 12). While recognizing that this is a powerful and useful perspective, March (1996, p. 12) also notes that John Stuart Mill once described Jeremy Bentham, the father of modern consequentialism, as having “*the completeness of a limited man.*” Similarly, March (1996, p. 13) points out that extending the marketplace metaphor to business schools leads to a situation in which

The problems of business schools are pictured as problems of creating educational programs (or public relations activities) that satisfy the wishes of customers and patrons rich enough to sustain them.... But [this] fails to capture the fundamental nature of the educational soul.... A university is only incidentally a market. It is more essentially a temple—a temple dedicated to knowledge and a human spirit of inquiry. It is a place where learning and scholarship are revered, not primarily for what they contribute to personal or social well-being but for the vision of humanity that they symbolize, sustain, and pass on.... In order to sustain the temple of education, we probably need to rescue it from those deans, donors, faculty, and students who respond to incentives and calculate consequences and restore it to those who respond to senses of themselves and their callings.

As a final comment on that AMA conference session (interested readers can find a fuller report by Leigh and Mowen [1996]), it was interesting to monitor the audience reactions as I was speaking. I would estimate that only one-fifth to one-quarter of the people were providing affirmative signals, while a very few were demonstrably negative. Most people gave no overt reactions either way. I’m therefore not at all sure where most marketing academics stand on these central issues for our field, but I sense that my positions are not theirs. At a personal level, this is quite all right. I was very pleased that day to be given a chance to speak for myself and on behalf of at least a significant—if minority—portion of that audience. At an aggregate level, however, I think it is crucial that we not allow ourselves to be diminished, and I do fear that this is what has been happening. On further reading, I particularly liked J. Scott Armstrong’s (1995) book review on a report on MBA education, did not favor Ernst & Young’s (1995) report on change in business education, and have found Trieschmann and colleagues (2000) and Zimmerman (2001) to be enlightening. I don’t

want my concerns to go on at length, so I will merely highlight two other themes that are intertwined with the various issues noted here. I think they deserve special mention because there are signs that they have not been handled sufficiently at this point and may well be threats in the future.

Some journal reviewers seem to be out of control, are damaging scholarship, and may even be driving “the gentler people” out of research. This is simply not journal reviewers’ role. In making this point, let me stress that this is neither a complaint based on personal outcomes nor one directed at journal editors, all of whom I have found to be quite sensitive to this issue. It is the case, however, that in many of my papers (for years now) and in numerous cases of colleagues who have shown me their review interchanges, at least one reviewer is taking on a role that can be perceived as threatening free thought; free expression; choices of concepts, approaches, and methods; and other foundations of scholarship. Even if unintentional, this issue needs to be pursued because of its destructive impacts on core academic motivations and behaviors. To illustrate (and this is by no means one of the worst cases, in that the review was quite competent and not mean), for one of my papers a (major journal) reviewer recommended “revise and resubmit” but insisted that the paper be entirely altered in style, and he or she opened the comments by saying, “*If you want to have a paper accepted in (major journal) you need to....*” Now, it happened that I had been on the editorial board of this journal for about ten years, had given hundreds of hours of effort to reviews, and wasn’t about to accept that kind of feedback except from the editor, who did apologize for it (but did not retract his cover letter’s conclusion that the paper in its present form did not constitute a contribution to knowledge, when my belief was that it clearly did). Later, each time I opened that folder to modify the paper in accord with other feedback, I’d find myself so offended that I would just close it again. Finally, I resigned from that journal’s editorial board and withdrew the paper. The entire episode struck me as so wrong that I never did submit the paper to another journal, though I personally view it to be among my best pieces of work and a terrific offering by Peter Dickson, my coauthor on it, on whose dissertation it was based (we had struck a prior agreement on who would do what with the database), who was still untenured at the time, and whose career could have suffered because of my intransigence. Fortunately, it did appear in MSI’s Working Paper series, was sought out and reprinted by Hal Kassirjian and Tom Robertson as the lead article in their consumer behavior readings book (they commented that they especially liked its reader-friendly style!), was used as a key basis for a model by Glen Urban and John Hauser in their book, and over the years has been fairly frequently cited, particularly within the marketing science community. I point this out not so much to vindicate my position (had we revised, I believe that the paper would have appeared) but to point to the sharp contrast with the review team’s initial summary judgment, which was that in this form the paper did not constitute “a contribution to knowledge.” To underscore my point, I don’t really think there was a villain in this tale (I believe there are in some other ones I’ve seen and heard), and Peter and I have survived just fine, but it must be obvious that such

efforts to dictate too strongly the directions of research trade-offs impinge on freedom of thought, suppress initiatives, and likely damage scholarship in the long run.

Although damage in this case may have been minimal (and, some may argue, even self-inflicted), there is also the matter of the *accumulation of such experiences* and what toll this takes on the field. In this longer-term sense, it is especially painful to talk with a few of my former students and many others I met as young, aspiring scholars in the field, who are now out of academia, or virtually so, embittered at their experiences and at dealing with the impacts of these blows to their youthful enthusiasm and self-confidence. Peoples' personalities do differ—some people will fight back and stick with the battle until the work gets in, but others will not, and it's not really evident to me that they aren't equal in scholarship potential. This isn't, moreover, something that "someone else" is doing to us: We're doing it to ourselves. As to readings, three useful works I've found are Holbrook's (1986), the AMA Task Force Report (1988), and John Lynch's ACR Presidential Address (1998), in which he warns against reviewers' "hijacking" of papers.

We need to consider that knowledge does not simply accumulate over time but can be effectively lost from a field of study if it is not transmitted across generations of academics. This insight extends across several issues, so I merely want to raise it to stimulate further thinking. Some people are concerned, for example, that the "marketing mainstream" is disappearing as specialization leads to fragmentation (a striking visual has been available recently by observing the *hotel check-out* lines for the Society for Consumer Psychology meetings just prior to or in parallel with the *hotel check-in* lines for the AMA Winter Educators' Conference). Some academics are concerned about incursions from other fields into marketing's previous domains (e.g., Reibstein 2001), whereas others note major issues for doctoral program design (e.g., Wilkie 1997; Wilkie and Moore 1997). In any event, this is a central issue for marketing scholarship and needs to be seriously addressed by the college of thinkers in the field.

In closing this section, permit me a brief editorial comment. In looking across the positive initiatives I've listed, it strikes me how broad, important, and very impressive they are and what a wonderful opportunity it has been for me to variously observe, participate, and/or benefit from them. As indicated in the final entry, the challenge has now shifted to current thinkers in our field—and in business academia overall—to create bold new initiatives that will best stimulate, direct, support, and sustain our field's scholarship in the future.

On Striving for Scholarship: Personal Dimensions

In closing, I'd like to just briefly address some special personal aspects of our lives as thinkers about the field of marketing. Because straightforward discussion of some issues might be perceived as trite, I'll continue with musings at times.

Inspiration, Aspiration, Dedication

Terry Clark's invitation to undertake this essay has allowed me to raise certain issues to consciousness, and for this I am most appreciative. Up to this point, I've stayed largely within the province of business and marketing academia, but I think that many of us actually feel a broadened heritage and linkage to the university and its community of scholars. Some of my warmest memories are involved with campus walks and visits. For example, although I never attended there and only briefly taught there, I've always felt a singular level of respect for Harvard, the university. I used to visit Boston often and would typically arise early in the mist, make my way along the river, through the Square, and into Harvard Yard, where I would feel a peculiar sense of comfort or belonging. Sometimes I'd wander aimlessly, observing others, and sometimes I'd imagine footsteps of seekers after knowledge in earlier generations. What an honor, and what a pleasure, to be able to search for knowledge.

I can see that I'm going to need to cut this off quickly, so let me briefly mention a few literature sources in this zone that I've enjoyed over the years. In pursuit of scholarship, it can be easy to lose perspective (I may have already amply demonstrated this!), but I've found that even a brief consideration of the breadth and depth of what is already known in the world brings a bucket of humility to swamp any false pride in this sphere (see, e.g., Wilkie 1981). For example, all we need do is briefly reflect on what we personally know about five great disciplines of the mind and their implications for our work:

- Mathematics* enables us to comprehend space and time and is a key to the natural and material sciences.
- Language* enables us to add human reason and communicate and transmit knowledge.
- History* is our repository of knowledge and requires language for its basic materials.
- Logic* introduces the principles of reasoning and uses language to arrive at new facts and knowledge.
- Philosophy* transcends narrow principles to consider norms and ideals for human existence.

Beyond these, the aesthetic areas of art, music, and literature offer further opportunities for appreciative humility.

Back when I was first wondering what it might be like to try to pursue a scholarly life, I read two books that offered me inspiration and whose messages have stayed with me. One, *The Cultivated Mind* by Edward Hodnet (1963), proposed three distinguishing properties:

- The cultivated mind is conceptual.* It seeks understanding, desires to know, and is willing to speculate.
- The cultivated mind is discriminating.* It is sensitive to value and is willing to distinguish and differentiate.
- The cultivated mind is humane.* It regularly moves beyond an obsession with self and the press of daily affairs. It is thus capable of a serious concern with the nature of human existence.

Congenial views to these are also provided in a book by Columbia's University Professor, Jacques Barzun, titled (1959) *The House of Intellect*. On reflection, one element I find to have been diminished in today's business academic environment is an appreciation for the central role of the academy. In that regard, Barzun is certainly refreshing, if hard-line:

These considerations make only more imperative the safeguard of the master virtues of intellect. They are, once again: concentration, continuity, articulate precision, and self-awareness. Intellect needs the congregation of talents spurring one another to high achievements by the right degree of proximity and discourse; it needs the language and the conversation that maintain its unity like a beneficent air; it needs precision to dispel the blinding fogs of folly or stupidity; it needs self-awareness to enjoy its own sport and keep itself from vainglory.

Finally, I have found James March's retirement comments particularly inspiring, in part because he also attempted to carry out his scholarly calling within the context of a high-powered professional business school. Recalling my previous description of his position, he offers a contrast to the consequentialist tradition—one not found much in business schools, but one to be considered. It is based on a motivation to "fulfill the obligations of personal and social identities and senses of self." Reflecting this driving force are those "who support and pursue knowledge and learning because they represent a proper life, who read books not because they are relevant to their jobs but because they are not, who do research not in order to secure their reputations or improve the world but in order to honor scholarship" (March 1996, p. 13).

Responsibility and Radio Ratings: Is a Zero Possible?

A few years ago, I was scanning the newspaper when a realization struck with stunning impact. A brief report on local radio ratings sweeps contained odd language on the last-place entry, an AM "oldies" outlet. Although the story didn't say it outright, my inference was that the consumer survey might have registered that *no one* was listening to this station. Now, we all know this is a possible survey outcome, but when you think about it, what does it really mean? I began to think about this:

Could there be times when *no single human being* is listening to this station? Are there times when *no radio on earth* is receiving its signal, when not even a single household pet is hearing its messages? And worse, as the survey suggests, could this be a regular event? *Is it even possible that no living creature outside the station ever listens to it?*

The implications hit me like a bombshell ... visions of a robotic transmitter beaming out signals across a totally inattentive Indiana landscape—the finest efforts of Elvis, the Supremes, the Beatles, Elton, or Whitney—voices and rhythms trapped in invisible, unheard radio waves. I began to picture these waves, a continual stream, over towns and across fields, drifting determinedly into nothingness. The marketing analogue of the philosophical stopper ("Imagine that a tree falls in a forest ...") had in fact arrived, and right here in South Bend, no less.

Several cogent managerial questions did come to mind. Is it feasible for a ratings firm to report a zero rating? If not, what does get reported, and is this fair? What *does* a zero result mean? For the advertisers, what will their thoughts be when they read these findings? What would mine be? For the station's executives and on-air talent, I felt only sympa-

thy: What a total shock. And for the station's sales team, talk about a credibility gap!¹

Then I began to think about our own field. Do we face a parallel situation? Are there any articles out there that are going entirely unread? Are there valuable insights or findings being sent out but not being perceived by others in the field? How many of us are so busy teaching, producing research, and performing other tasks that we're not learning much else?² Most of us chose this field because we wanted to learn, to grow, to understand. Given this worthy early motivation, it's reasonable to ask which signals out there we're allowing to go regularly unreceived because our personal "radios" are shut off or tuned elsewhere. And what is the real cost of this for each of us as an individual scholar? What about the cost to knowledge development in the field? Interesting issues to ponder...

"They've Got the Spirit!"

I'd like to end this essay on a few high notes. One is to comment most favorably on the many opportunities I've had to benefit from, witness, or reflect on the finer attributes of a large number of fellow marketing academics. As just a small nod in this regard, I'd like to refer briefly back to the Levine tale, in which I mentioned that our public handling of gaps in knowledge can be a problem. In this regard, several memorable cases in which young marketing academics have handled this in impressive ways come to mind. For example, as noted previously, in my early years at Florida, the recruiting workshops sometimes became highly intense (and perhaps overly so). On one such occasion, a job candidate was stumped by a faculty query into the true essentials of a construct versus how it was being employed. After two bluffs that didn't fly, the candidate stepped back and simply acknowledged not having ever thought about this issue before. Not impressive in itself, but what the candidate did about it was—the next year a major conference paper appeared on this exact issue, in which it was addressed very well. Or the time when a talented candidate from a top program finished the job interview with "So that's what I'm doing. However, I've been told that there's a lot I still don't know about this area and that your group (the Florida faculty) would be able to point me in the right direction. What would you recommend I do now?"

Or just recently, when a former job candidate sat down across from me at a Doctoral Consortium dinner and said: "When I interviewed at Florida you asked me a question I couldn't answer. I've thought about it a lot, and now I have

¹What happened, you ask? No public comment ensued. The station shifted its format, adding a quite scatological syndicated morning show among the changes. This content shift obviously attracted some new listeners. Angry letters to the editor began to appear from offended citizens, demanding to know (1) why such tasteless material was allowed on the public airwaves and (2) why this station's upstanding ownership (a religious organization) would ever choose to give it air time. Weren't they listening to their own outlet? Station management then issued a public apology and announced it was canceling the new show immediately, in midcontract, no less. As a final irony, soon thereafter a leading FM outlet began trumpeting that it would rescue South Bend by offering this popular fare each morning, and it has, ever since.

²This is an issue we raised in the 1988 AMA Task Force Report on knowledge development.

the answer.” My (shocked) response: “Wasn’t that [quickly calculating] ... almost 20 years ago?” “Yes, but it’s still a good question, and now I have a good answer.” My clever riposte: “Well, *now* I don’t want to hear it!” I got the answer anyway. (By the way, although I can’t name names, all three of these people would be instantly recognizable as leading researchers in the field today, and I think their honesty and drive in handling these situations were both impressive and instructive.) Still, given that it is frequently our role to communicate new knowledge, projecting confidence and competence, it’s hard to balance this against the natural humility stemming from ignorance. Yet I do believe that this is a wonderful element of the academic life—the acceptance, even celebration, of a lack of knowledge and its stimulating impetus on a search for further understanding. Beyond our freedom to speculate, this may even be its finest attribute!

A Closing Comment: On Marketing as a Field of Study

Several friends who have read this essay suggested that an appropriate ending would be to reproduce a recent quotation in which I tried to summarize my view of marketing into a succinct sound bite (*Marketing News* 2001, p. 30). On reflection I like this idea, not so much as a measure of the quotation itself but because it does capture a genuine view that I’ve always held of this field, that I believe many of us share, and that underpins my optimistic view of the pursuit of scholarship in this area:

This may sound odd, but from my earliest days as a student I’ve seen Marketing as a wonderfully complex and important field. There hasn’t been a time for me when it wasn’t presenting interesting challenges and paradoxes. For example, it relates and reflects many more basic disciplines in a university, yet it does so in a manner where “the bottom line” counts. It can be quantitative, but it’s also always qualitative. It can be very high-tech, but almost always also involves people and their limitations. It can involve duplicitous behaviors, but also can bring wonder to and improvements in peoples’ daily lives. I often look back and feel fortunate to have chosen to be in Marketing.... I’ve certainly never regretted my choice for a minute.

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