



MOVED BY MENTORS

Annuity News Magazine by Linda Koco

Three platform speakers at MDRT's 84th annual meeting addressed the powerful impact that mentors have had on the lives of people in various walks of life.

Incoming MDRT President Jennifer A. Borislow said her mentor was Gene Durand, a leading general agent from John Hancock who hired her when she herself was a young woman, age 22 and just out of college.

"He changed my life," she said. Durand told her the work would be hard but that he would be by her side, she recalled. He did exactly that, she continued, by offering support and encouragement, providing training, and instilling values such as patience and trust.

The support continued even after Durand became a quadriplegic at age 38 due to a freak accident while sitting in a barber's chair. Borislow was still in her 20s at the time.

Durand's support even continues to this day, she said, noting that he was watching her deliver her MDRT address through a streaming video arranged by MDRT.

The accident that disabled Durand became a defining moment in her own life, Borislow said. It gave her clarity about the importance of having a mentor who really believes in you; of having balance in one's life; and about the need for proper estate planning.

Chad Hyman, president of Speak, a San Diego communications company, told of several mentors in his own life starting with his own father. He recounted how Chad and his teenage friends had at one time mocked Melody, a disabled teenager who had trouble eating in the school cafeteria. Overhearing that, his dad took swift steps to confront the mocking and turn it around — and in a way that made things better for Melody, bringing her acceptance in school and well beyond.

He describes Melody as one of the angels in his life.

Later, when Chad himself became disabled — when his tractor tipped over -- he said it was another angel — Jennifer — who found him and got help. And it was his father who took steps that resulted in an inspirational MDRT speaker visiting Chad while in the hospital.

His takeaway: "It's not about you. It's about the people on your journey." Where advisors are concerned, he said, "your jobs aren't about you. Anyone can be a financial advisor ... and anyone can be an insurance agent." The important thing is to be aware of all the people along the way who help and support and who may themselves need help and support.

Jose Anselmo Feliciano, a four-year MDRT member and president of Feliciano Financial Group, Tyler, Texas, spoke of his father and mother, who were both deaf but raised him and his two younger siblings despite encountering multiple difficulties.

He did go through a period of being embarrassed at his parents being deaf, Feliciano said. But when at age 18 he found he had to decide whether to take guardianship of his younger brother and sister, he said he looked back to the example of his parents.

He wound up working 30 hours a week, attending community college and being elected president of his fraternity, beating out an opponent who had money and tuition paid in full.

Feliciano's takeaway: "The same parents who I felt embarrassed of at age 12, because they were different, because they were deaf, gave me the most important lesson of my life. ... Stop worrying about what everybody else thinks. Just be. So many of us spend time worrying about what everyone else thinks that it stops us from being who we really are and doing what we really want. It prevents us from making bold choices and taking risks."

MDRT starting social network

The Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) will launch its own MDRT Network before the end of the year, according to Borislow.

The network will enable MDRT members to connect with other MDRT members through a social media program that MDRT is setting up for the use of MDRT members only, Borislow said. More details will be posted in the fall, she added.

The initiative is part of MDRT's plan to keep enhancing its mentoring program, said the Methuen, Mass. advisor and 23-year MDRT member.

The social media aspect should be of interest to younger advisors.

Mentoring younger people as they enter the business can make a big difference in their success and career paths, said Borislow. One of MDRT's responsibilities is "to make the profession of insurance and financial advising attractive to young people, she stressed.

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