

Remarks on the Awarding of an Honorary
Doctorate to John W. Gittinger

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I'm supposed to be making some remarks about John Gittinger and his career. John's sitting there and wishing that I wouldn't. In fact I think that John is thinking he'd rather that I would be anywhere else in the world right now than right here; and I also suspect that he would just as soon be right there along with me. But, John, you don't get your wish because there are 85 people sitting out here, each of whom have paid \$10 apiece for the privilege of being here and that's \$850 worth of pre-paid honor and I'm going to start spending some of it.

I have known John Gittinger for 35 years . . . 35 years, 7 months and 2 weeks, and I have looked forward to this moment for at least 30 of them. You know, to comprehend John's career, the scope of the contribution he has made to this country and to his chosen field of psychology, you have to contemplate the context of the time in which that career evolved. Like too many people in four generations of this century, John Gittinger's professional preparation was interrupted by a war. And, in the early 40's John Gittinger left Oklahoma and his graduate student studies and went into the service with the U. S. Navy. Some people would say that his career got off the ground when he joined the Naval Air Corp. Excuse me John, the Naval Air Forces, but I wouldn't make a comment like that. At any rate, it was in the service, in World War II, with the United States Naval Air Forces, that John honed his clinical skills and, Thank Goodness, he survived that period and returned to Oklahoma where he became the chief psychologist in the Oklahoma State

Mental Services. Shortly afterwards, in 1950, he packed Mary Frances and their worldly possessions into a car, along with a briefcase with a hundred test protocols of patients from the funny farm in Oklahoma, and he came to Washington D. C.

Now, at that time, Washington was a sleepy, little town on the edge of the Potomac, which suddenly found itself the center of the free world. And our leadership in the government in the late 40's and early 50's was equally unprepared for that role. It was a time of national and governmental bewilderment and confusion and a substantial amount of naivete.

We went into World War II a relatively minor country, living in the shadow of Europe; and we came out of World War II in charge of the free world. Some very strange things were happening. Our former friends were turning into enemies. Our comrades in arms in the Soviet Union and on the mainland of China were suddenly showing tremendous hostility to the United States, and moving about in their own game plans to take charge of large portions of the world. Meanwhile, former enemies were struggling to become friends, and the Germans and Japanese were learning how to become our allies in international, political and economic development. We found ourselves engaged in a war in Korea, and for the first time in our lives, prisoners of war, who throughout all of the years before had maintained their integrity in the face of the enemy, seemingly were turning into traitors. The

leadership of the United States was looking for answers, and they turned to the behavioral community and they said, "What is going on? Who are these communist Chinese? What is a commune? Who are the Russians? And what is the difference between a Russian and a Soviet? What is going on with our prisoners in Korea? What is this brainwashing that we are hearing about?"

And, when they turned to the behavioral community, there was nobody there. There was no behavioral sciences community in the way in which we understand it today. There were a lot of individual researchers and practitioners and some of them were very brilliant. But there was no organization; there was no cohesion; there was no integration; there was no organization that could bring together resources and put them to work. But John Gittinger, recently from Oklahoma, with some insights beginning to bubble up from his work in the mental health services in Oklahoma responded to this call for help and said, "I think we can do something about that." And he proceeded to develop an assessment methodology which is without peer, now or at any time in the past. Steven Hawking is searching for a unified field theory of physics. John Gittinger produced a unified theory of personality development; a unified theory of behavior that embraces development, personality, healthy and normal adjustment, abnormal adjustment, the relationships of one individual to another, relationships between people, relationships between people and groups, the characteristics of those groups, implications for the understanding of ethnic groups and societies and cultures and national character. And, it is a methodology which in

turn has a sound basis in psychometrics and it is a methodology which is testable, which is subject to verification and validation. No other methodology exists that has those characteristics.

In the course of developing this methodology, in response to the other bewildering questions about the Chinese and Soviets and Koreans and prisoner of war behavior and brainwashing and the potential impact of drugs as a weapon to be used against our officials overseas and as a source of danger to our community and our society, John Gittinger directed a massive research undertaking. He drew to his cause vast numbers of individual researchers who were functioning in various fields in the United States. The roster of people who responded to John's call in the 50's and 60's is a veritable Who's Who of people of consequence in the behavioral community at that time. People like Martin Orne, Leonard Carmichael, Joseph Matarazzo, Charles Osgood, Harold Wolfe, Larry Hinkle, just to mention a few. And with the result of their researches in sociology, psychology, personality development, psychometrics, applied anthropology and his own developing methodology which addressed all of these concepts of human behavior, John Gittinger became an advisor at the highest levels of our government, to the White House, and a consultant to the State Department. He is the only behavioral scientist ever to sit on the Board of National Estimates, the highest analytic body which existed at that time in the American Intelligence Community. John was an adviser, not only within our own government, but he became and adviser on the

international scene. He consulted with the governments, the political leaders, the military, the intelligence community, throughout the free world -- in Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia. Except for the mainland of China and the Soviet block, the visa stamps in John Gittinger's passport cover the world like a can of paint.

As a methodologist, a researcher, and adviser, John Gittinger was first, foremost and finally a teacher. His role as a teacher is finding permanence in the creation, for example, of the PAS Foundation, an organization of three generations of his students which is dedicated to the preservation of John's work and to its further enlargement and expansion. The PAS Foundation has created its own PAS Foundation Journal to insure that what John has taught and what we learn in applying his teaching is preserved for others yet to come. And we see it enshrined here at Hocking in the Gittinger Assessment Center, a modest beginning for what we know is going to grow into a larger institution rendering tremendous services, not only to the school, but to the Ohio community and to the behavioral community at large. Through John's teachings, many of the rest of us have gained growth that we could never have achieved alone. For some few of us who were seeking guidance in our professional lives, there came the great, good fortune of meeting John Gittinger, who provided focus and structure for our professional work. Working under John's tutelage and working with John's methodology we achieved remarkable success -- remarkable success! And every time I achieved a success, I came away not only exhilarated, but also somewhat frightened; because I knew

because of that success, they would expect me to do it again, and I was never absolutely certain that I could. Having access to John and John's methodology was liking having your hands on the controls of a wonderful black box. You could make the system work and it would produce magnificent results, but you were never absolutely certain what it was that was going on inside. That is the uniqueness of John's genius!

John, I'm going to take a line from another of my role models. Perry Como, who says, "When we soared higher than the eagles, you were the wind beneath our wings."

I have one message for John Gittinger and for Don Taylor, the Chairman of our Board, and for John Light, the President of our College, for Roxanne DuVivier, the Director of our Center, and for all the rest of you out there who are associated in some way with Hocking Technical College. The message, John, comes from Martin Orne, whom you remember I mentioned a little while ago in that panoply of people who worked with and served John in the 50's and 60's. Martin Orne is a celebrated forensic psychiatrist, an eminent psychological researcher, perhaps the world's authority on interviewing, forensic interrogation, hypnosis and much of the mythology that is associated with it. I thought Martin Orne was someone who would be thrilled to know about John's award this evening and I called the American Psychiatric Association and asked them if they could put me in touch with Dr. Orne. Within less than half an hour, Martin Orne was on the telephone. He was literally enroute to the airport for another one of his many international meetings and, right at this moment,

I think he is presenting an address to an international conclave in Australia. And, John, as I expected, Martin Orne was absolutely delighted with the news. After he and I got through congratulating each other on the good fortune of having known and worked with John Gittinger, he said. "Mike, I need two things from you. I want to be able to get in touch with John because I want to write to him, and, I want to know how to get in touch with Hocking Technical College because I have a message for them.

"I want them to know that Hocking honors itself in conveying honor on John Gittinger."