



Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service

Honey Nashman

Welcome to GW Students and the Naming of the Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic
Engagement and Public Service

August 2015

Welcome and warm greetings on this special occasion. Mr. President, colleagues, family, guests and, most importantly, the eager and talented freshman class of 2019, whose scholarly efforts I hope will carry forward to make a difference in the world.

As George Washington University students – as human beings – as the pulse of the next generation of thought and soul leaders:

Keep Calm

And

Download the Scholarship of Engagement App!

In your work for the common good, give yourself time to let your passions find YOU. Balance your academic, civic engagement, and leisure activities. Remember that you have but one nervous system to give to your country – lose it wisely.

Think about what is really important to you. What truly matters? Is it possible for you to be better than you used to be? To climb to your next level of achievement – your actions can change the world. Touch lives here and abroad – learn from your efforts and the individuals you work with. It's a “right back at you” moment. Endeavor to be an ambassador working to connect the dots between poverty and hope. Help turn struggles into victories so that we all experience true inclusion.

There are over 7,000 local, national and international nonprofits in the nation's capital (I suspect you can call that Nonprofit Nirvana) and The Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service can support you in helping you find a place to serve appropriate for your skills, interests, and experience while matching you with the voice of the community.

In a recent article by David Brooks, he posits that there are two sets of virtues, the resume virtues (the skills that you bring to the workplace) and the eulogy virtues (the virtues that are talked about you at your funeral). Think about what is really important to you, what really matters. What will make you a better person on the inside as well as on paper? William Shakespeare suggests: “Less without and more within.”

On a personal note, I love this great academic institution, George Washington University, the University with a heart, where the historic past meets the challenges of the future and where graduates succeed. A University dedicated to the scholarship of engagement. I

hope you will participate in our extended classrooms here and abroad, apply theory into practice, learn from our amazing community partners

What is behind our family's commitment and support to the Center of Civic Engagement and Public Service?

First: Connections

My parents were immigrants, a part of the great Eastern European migration. My father, Isadore Weinstein, came to America when he was 11 years old, traveling alone, searching for the same opportunities that other immigrants are hoping for. Homeless, he spent his first several days in DC on a park bench across the street from GW. He married a wonderful and courageous woman named Rose, who only a few years after they married was told by her physician that she had breast cancer, years later her physician informed her that she had the longest records of cancer ever recorded, these life experiences impacted them and resulted in their deep appreciation of life, family, education, justice, and respect for the dignity of all individuals and were instrumental in my development. Among the many important messages garnered from my parents were: "The fullness of living with death close at hand" (White Cliffs of Dover) AND that service to the community is a privilege that enriches us all. Their advocacy for true inclusion, social justice and human rights speaks to me on a daily basis. Quite honestly, I feel that I am fortunate to be among the many winners of the genetic sweepstakes.

Additional GW connections: all three of our children were born at the GW Hospital, earned their undergraduate degrees from GW as did our sons in law, and our grandson is currently a Presidential Scholar at GWU. His older brother graduated with honors from GW North *aka* Harvard University.

My husband, Al, received an honorary degree from GW and also served on the Board of the Northern Virginia Campus. Al is affectionately known in our immediate family as Honey's real life "ALstar" navigation system. Here a quote from the book *Humans of New York* seems appropriate: to the world you may be known as one person but to one person you may be the world.

I was a member of the faculty for 43 glorious rewarding and memorable years, retiring from my position in the Sociology Department as Director of the Human Services Program which has recently been appropriately renamed, the Human Services and Social Justice Program.

So you can see my connection and commitment to GWU. Or as the wonderful sage, Mae West (interestingly, there is also a GW connection with Mae) said, "Too much of a good thing is wonderful" or perhaps the Mafia quote from Godfather is more fitting – "once you belong you can never leave."

In addition to my personal relationship with the Center, GW's inspirational history of Community Building Community, successful efforts by the University to improve the quality of life of our citizens while also respecting the dignity of the recipient, were key

factors in our decision to support the Center. These shared values, the positive multiplying effects of our contribution towards these goals, played an important role in this decision.

There is signage on a Mom and Pop jewelry store in my hometown which reads: “Ears pierced while you wait”
(think about it). Yes, sometimes there are no choices.

The Center has been a trailblazer in making a difference in the community under the most able leadership of the Executive Director, Amy Cohen and her awesome staff. Amy Cohen, our serial social entrepreneur, who in my opinion has one of the most challenging positions at GW: the great responsibility of leading and supporting the university family in meaningful community partnership and engaged scholarship and service in the Nations’ Capital. It is our hope that our gift will be the catalyst for an even greater impact.

Here’s the Honey do list for the Center. Hopefully, a number of these will (catch your fancy)

- Expanding service/learning with additional talented faculty involvement and support of these efforts from the University
- Increasing civic engagement programs related to the cultural arts, sports and recreation with increasing participation and inclusion of individuals with disabilities and vulnerable citizens
- Sponsorships of symposiums and sharing of high impact practices – the power of collaboration & knowledge generation
- Opportunities for research linked to the Center, which could stimulate additional faculty participation and subsequent rewards
- Further strategic staff hiring
- Success in attracting investors in raising capital for the public good; additional collaboration with private businesses
- A Scholar in Residence Program; Graduate Fellowships
- Additional use of digital technology in support of the Center’s goals

We have the potential be the Main Entrance for all other University Philanthropic Centers—GW Making History & Champion of Civic Engagement—we put our values into action.

AND that-----Amy-----is my vision for the first 18 days.

I'd like to close with the words and wisdom of a previous Nobel Prize Laureate (2011) Tomas Tranströmer from his poem, *Preludes*.

“Two truths approach each other. One comes from inside, the other from outside, and where they meet we have a chance to catch sight of ourselves.”

It is our hope that you will continue to be a part of our caring community and will raise the roof of opportunity for others through our GWU home, The Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service.

My thanks go first to my husband Al, an inspiring and extraordinary human being, for making this moment possible, and to our family, our wonderful children and grandchildren.

My sincere thanks to Denise Lambert, our friend and brilliant counselor, and the TIAA-CREF Olympic Gold Team, Steve Worrel and Mike De Spirito; my friends and colleagues in the Sociology Department; President Steven Knapp, Provost Steve Lerman, Vice Provost Terri Harris Reed, GW Administrators, John Kendrick of Development; Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs, Peter Konwerski, a major force in the development and building of the Human Services Program; Amy Cohen; and Emily Morrison, Director of the Human Services and Social Justice Program and longtime supporter and faculty leader in the Center's activities.

I don't want to overlook anyone because I know that it would haunt me in the future—seriously—thanks to everyone that I have ever met—you have made a difference in my life.

I guess this is actually a “Once Upon a Time” moment—I am enormously privileged to have this naming opportunity—it has validated my inner dialogue. It is all just beyond my imagination. My heartfelt appreciation for this extraordinary opportunity.

If I had my favorite drink right now—a diet soda, with no ice, and 2 limes—I would make this toast:

To GWU, a great academic University with a Heart, a leader among the positive institutions of the world:

Be well, be playful and do good.