

**Remarks of Mary D. Miller
In Accepting the Robert J. Myers Award for Public Service
October 24, 2011**

I am deeply honored to receive this award. It is a very good thing that the Academy gave me advance notice that I was to be the recipient as I was literally speechless for several hours after receiving the news.

As many of you may know, I took my first actuarial exam at the age of 40. In high school I had seen a brochure that said what a great career it was for a man, so I immediately determined it was what I wanted to be. However it was not very easy to find out how to become an actuary back then so I started my first career as a high school math teacher. After my second career as a stay at home Mom, I was in a graduate level statistics course when one of my classmates said he was studying to take his first actuarial exam so I did too. He was a more traditional age and looking for his first job, and I distinctly remember him saying that if all else failed, at least he might be able to get a job as a ‘government’ actuary. Ten years later, when the company I was working for was acquired by another firm and was moving my job to North Carolina, I accepted a position as the first actuary for the Financial Regulation Division of the Ohio Department. I thought I would do that for a couple of years and then move on to something more interesting at another company. That was before I learned the ‘dirty little secret’ of regulatory work—it is more interesting than anything I could have ever imagined. Big companies/ little companies, industry leaders/financially challenged—I get to see and work with them all.

I became acquainted with other regulatory actuaries like Elise Liebers, Ann Kelly, John Purple, and Julia Phillips who were such tremendous role models. As I worked on Academy committees, where I had been invited to give a regulatory perspective, I met people like Pat Teufel and Andrea Sweeny who exhibited such a commitment to public service that I knew this was work that I wanted to continue to pursue. So when the opportunities did come to move back to the private sector, I was financially tempted but I knew there was no turning back. The opportunity to work, through the NAIC, to make a difference in the way regulation worked was something I couldn’t turn down. While I hope the changes I have helped to put in place have made a difference for the better, at the end of the day, I can only hope that the next generation of regulators has a more solid foundation from which to make things even better in the future.

In closing, I guess I could say public service was in my genes. My parents met when they were both working for the State of Ohio, five of my siblings have undergraduate education degrees and the other two are nurses. I can honestly say that for any of you who think you might wish to try a ‘government job’, you too will find it better than you imagined. But if you are not yet ready for the pay cut, the next best thing is to volunteer for an Academy committee. When people ask me ‘Why should I join the Academy?’ or ‘What does the Academy do for me?’, my answer is always ‘It gives you the opportunity to volunteer to work on something that will make a difference in public policy.’

I thank the Academy for recognizing the role of the public sector actuary by annually presenting this award, and I am honored to be this year’s recipient.