Linda Costigan Lederman, Candidate for President of the National Communication Association, 1997

I was born in New York on Long Island in the 1940s, the first child and first grandchild, on either side of the family. My mother, Winifred Goldberg, was Jewish and my father, George B. Costigan, was an Irish Catholic. Interfaith marriages were very unusual in those times. Two years later my only sibling, my brother, George, Jr., was born. My brother weighed almost twelve pounds at birth and was called an iddy, biddy baby by family and friends. According to my father when he visited the nursery in the hospital, the nurses told him to go get the baby "a hamburger" because he was the size of a six-month-old baby at birth. The name Biddie remained with him throughout his life. I was the only one in the family who never seemed to have a knick name. At least until college when my maiden name, Costigan, was misspelled in the college newspaper and I became to my close friends, Costigum. The name fortunately for me did not last after college.

Both my parents were high school teachers, as had been my mother's mother. As a consequence, the last thing I wanted was to become a teacher. My son, who seems to be beginning a career in college teaching at present, much like his mother, thought he'd never teach either. I am happy for him, as I am for myself, that I discovered eventually the joy and great satisfaction in my life of teaching college students.

My father, George B. Costigan, Sr., was an All American football player at Columbia who was eventually ABD at its Teachers College. My mother graduated from Syracuse University at nineteen and returned to teach at the high school from which she graduated, Long Beach High School in Long Beach, New York. Both her brothers were still students at the high school. In fact, the entire senior class when my mother began to teach had been first year students during her own senior year at the high school. My mother taught typing and business subjects, and my father taught English and math and was the football coach. When they began to date one another, my mother's brothers, who were in my father's math class, teased him unmercifully. My parents dated for a long time before being married by a judge. Neither family was happy about the interfaith marriage but accepted it once it was a fait accompli.

In my childhood I was always both a good student and very social. By high school I was active in almost all the major extracurricular groups, especially the student government, cheerleading squad, the newspaper, honor societies, debating society, and French club. I was an artist and painted, and I was also very athletic. In my generation athletic ability was something a girl tried to hide. My grandmother often advised me not to beat the 'boys' at tennis if I wanted them to take me out. In my senior year in high school, I was the art editor of my high school yearbook and the vice president of the student government. On my high school senior polls I won two titles: most enthusiastic and best personality. Knowing more now than back then about how adolescents view one another, I must have worked very hard to downplay my studiousness if the other students saw me so positively. In my high school at least, being a cheerleader had more cache than being smart. I was the only cheerleader in my high school class who was also in the honor society.

I grew up in a community in which my parents were well-known former high school teachers who ran a very successful children's camp. My father and mother both left teaching to run the children's camp business full time when I was in grade school. My father became a very successful community leader and eventually after having been elected to the town school board, went into state politics. My mother was his business partner and his most valued political

advisor. Although I did not recognize this until much later in my life, I think they were the greatest influence in my early years. I was very influenced by my father's commitment to help young people, and by my mother's courage to partner with my father in his business in a time in which that was quite rare. From them I learned to love politics, to value service to others, and to be hard working and diligent.

After graduating near the top of my high school class, I went to Pembroke College, the women's school at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Although the men's and women's colleges had separate admissions, administrations and campuses, all the students took classes together. Most classes consisted of twenty men from Brown and three to five women from Pembroke. Being as social as I was scholarly, I was happy about both the excellence of the education and the ratio of men to women. I had many friends who were men at Brown and think that my lifelong tendency to have friendships with men as well as with women was fueled by my experiences as an undergraduate there.

At Brown I majored in English Literature. While I had many fine professors who influenced me and helped me develop academically, the outstanding influence of my college education was Jim Barnhill, professor of speech and theater.

At Brown we had to take comprehensive exams in our senior year. They covered one's entire major and were a requirement for graduation that terrified most undergraduates. To compensate for the stress of preparing for those exams, students took what we called 'gut' (easy) courses in their spring semester senior year. It was my intention to attend law school after college, so I selected Public Speaking as one of my gut courses for my last semester, and met Jim Barnhill, who changed my life.

I was the only woman in Jim's Public Speaking class. I loved the course from the first time I had to get up to make a speech. Rather than being my easy course, I spent hours and hours on each five minute speech I had to prepare, and there were many nights in my dorm when anyone I could corral would become my audience as I practiced and rehearsed my speeches. Perhaps because I was the only woman in class, I worked hard to understand my audience and to find out how to shape my messages for them. I learned about audience analysis through my own first hand experience long before I read the textbook that described the concept. Thus from the first, for me, the study of speech communication included a hands-on, experience-based way to learn.

I graduated with honors from Brown and headed to Columbia Law School in the early 1960s. I was one of ten women in a class of 300 students, and it was my first experience with the overt, permissible hostility that men were able to express towards women in professional school during that era. Professors felt absolutely free to humiliate the women and to let the women know that the professors saw them as taking places in class from men who would have to support families. By the end of the first year it was clear that unless I was the top of my class I would not be able to get a job, and also, that being a lawyer would in all likelihood mean that I was choosing career over family. I wanted both. I wanted a career that was satisfying and to marry and raise a family. One night in utter despair I called Jim Barnhill and told him that I was miserable. "Of course you are," he bellowed at me over the phone. "You should be studying speech." He contacted the head of Columbia's Speech and Theatre Department, Madge Kramer, to introduce me to her as his best speech student, and arranged for me to be interviewed. Instead of returning to law school in the fall, I began my master's study in Speech and Theatre.

The year of misery at the Columbia Law School turned out to be a pivotal life experience. That year was perhaps the most profound influence upon my teaching style and philosophy. Courses were taught using the Socratic method and all students participated in experiential learning in Moot Court. The only thing I really enjoyed in the law school was the moot court. I won honors in Moot Court despite (or perhaps because of) that in my nervousness in presenting my opening arguments to the Judge (a third year student) I referred to him as Your Majesty rather than Your Honor. My pedagogy to this day stems from those experiences during that year in law school. I create learning simulations, just as Moot Court was a simulation of a courtroom experience. I include in these learning experiences for students questions and answers based on the Socratic method to encourage them to reflect upon those experiences.

I was very happy in the Masters program in Speech and Theatre at Columbia. In the 1960s programs were eclectic. I had to take courses in a wide array of areas that I might not otherwise have explored, for example, speech pathology and audiology, acting, oral interpretation, argumentation, and psychology of speech. My emphasis was on what we called Speech Arts and when I graduated with honors I began teaching at St. John's University in Jamaica, New York. I was twenty-two years old and tried very hard to look and act a lot older than the twenty-one year old seniors in my Public Speaking classes.

After two years at St. John's I took a job at Nassau Community College on Long Island and remained there for four years. I lived in Manhattan in Greenwich Village and commuted each day out of the city to the College. Although I received tenure at Nassau, I left for a job in New Jersey when I married Irving Lederman and moved ninety miles away to New Brunswick, New Jersey. For the next two years I taught at William Paterson College in North Jersey. When I gave birth to our son, Joshua Lederman, I left Paterson and moved with my husband to Princeton, New Jersey. I was writing a textbook, New Dimensions: An Introduction to Human Communication, and didn't expect to return to teaching until my son was in school.
My plans changed two years later when I learned of a one-semester appointment at Rutgers University from a former colleague who had read an ad about it in Spectra. She had not kept the ad, so I made several phone calls to the University until I found a department called the Department of Human Communication. When I asked about a job, the Department Chair, Dick Budd, asked how I had heard about it since it had just opened up that very morning when a graduate student informed Dick he could not teach for the spring. Dick and three other faculty members interviewed me the next day. Since classes began in a week they were even happier to find me than I was to find them. It was only after I was hired that I learned from the friend who'd told me about the job that the ad was actually for a position on another campus in another part of the state.

I joined the faculty the following week as an instructor. The following year I was hired as a full-time instructor again. At the end of that second year I decided that I wanted to have a tenure-track position at the University, and knew that I needed to earn a Ph.D. first. I applied to and was accepted at several established programs but chose to become a student in the brand new program in Communication and Information Systems at Rutgers. By studying at Rutgers I could also continue to teach part time in the department with so many people who were influential in my growth as a teacher and scholar. I was the first communication student to be accepted in the new Rutgers program and the first to receive a Teaching Assistantship. I was also the first to graduate from it.

When I was ABD, I was hired in a full time position that would convert to a three year assistant professorship when my degree was completed. It was only weeks later that my entire life was shaken by the sudden death of my husband, Irv. Irv was in his late forties and suffered a

massive heart attack. I was thirty-five at the time. Our son, Josh, was only five and a half years old. The next two years were difficult indeed, as I tried to absorb the terrible loss of my husband, deal with my son and his loss, complete my dissertation, run a home and work as a full time faculty member. Because this happened in the late 1970s there was far less support for women trying to juggle work and home than in contemporary times, and much of my time and energy were devoted to finding and hiring reliable people to help me take care of my son and our home. One of the reasons that I was fortunate to find myself at Rutgers was that I was able to take the work I had been doing on experience-based learning and interpersonal communication and incorporate it into the work that was going on at Rutgers in the 1970s. I was working on my first textbook and had come to believe that experiential learning was a rich approach for teaching students about both communication theory and communication practices. Although I began as an eclectic, and eventually focused on interpersonal and organizational communication, I think that the best descriptors of my work must include communication pedagogy and the role of experience and learning in any area of communication.

I finished the degree in 1979, began my assistant professorship and six years later was the first woman to receive tenure in the Department of Communication. I was also the first person in ten years to be tenured at all in the department. Five years after that, I was the first woman to become a full professor. Along the way at Rutgers I served two terms as the Inaugural Director of an interdisciplinary masters program and two terms as department Chair. After I stepped down from the role of chair in 1996, after more than a decade of administrative service at the University, I took a sabbatical leave. In the five years since that leave, my work has taken a new direction. I have been addressing the role of experiential learning and communication in the culture of college drinking. By focusing on a specific application of communication and experiential learning, I have found satisfying ways to learn more about and at the same time contribute to a healthy learning environment at Rutgers. Partnering with Lea Stewart and other communication faculty and graduate students, we have won funding approaching almost $1,000,000 to address the role of communication and experiential learning in college drinking, and other related college health issues. Lea and I created CHI, the Communication and Health Issues Partnership for Education and Research, an on-going collaborative partnership to address these issues and to seek funding to do so.

My professional service began when I was in my first job as an assistant professor at St. John's. Marie (Orie) Wittek was my self-appointed mentor at St. John's. Back in the 1960s when she and I taught together we did not have the word, "mentor," so we thought of ourselves only as friends. But Orie was much more than a friend. She was the one who took me almost literally by the hand and taught me everything about classroom teaching and about service to the profession. I was so inexperienced about the pragmatics of the classroom that she even had to teach me how to use the chalk on the chalkboard, how to keep a roster, and how to encourage students to answer questions in class. She also taught me the importance of joining and serving in professional associations. Orie led me to both the regional association (at that time called the Speech Association of the Eastern States---SAES) and the national (Speech Association of America--SAA). In each I began by doing the most mundane tasks: I worked on arrangements for luncheons and for gathering the students who would serve as ushers for a local meeting of SAA. In fact I spent an entire summer in the 1960s going to meetings with a program planner for whom I was in charge of ushers. I have long since forgotten the conference itself or the programs I attended, but I learned from that experience a great deal about professional service and the importance of valuing the services of others—no matter how seemingly inconsequential. My pride and satisfaction in contributing to that first conference even in such a minor way as being in charge of the ushers was the basis of my willingness to go on to do other service work in the profession.

In the 1960s and early 1970s my service was mostly to the SAES where I became the placement person and ran the service at the conference for about four years. While the main reason that I went to conferences was to present papers and to meet with professional friends I did not see otherwise, service became an increasingly important part of professional work to me by the late 1970s and continues to this day. I served in the eastern regional association, ECA, as an interest group leader, and eventually participated as an at-large member of the Executive Council. In 1983 I was nominated for, and became, the 2nd Vice President and in 1984 at the 75th Diamond Anniversary meeting of ECA I served as its president. As the nation's oldest scholarly communication association, ECA has always seen itself as an important historical note for the study of communication in this country. My graduate school mentor back in the 1960s, Madge Kramer, had been the President of the Association, and I was proud to follow in her footsteps.

It was through ECA that I began to do more service nationally, including serving as Editor of Communication Quarterly, one of the nation's oldest scholarly communication journals. My national service to NCA which had began many years before, became more active through my ECA commitments, first as the ECA representative to the Legislative Council, and then as a member of various committees, such as the nominating committee and program planning committee. Because of my commitment to experience-based learning, I served NCA as chair and secretary of that commission several times. When I was President of the Association for Communication Administration, I also served NCA as a member of the Legislative Council. Much of my activity in NCA over the years has been as a colleague and teacher, sharing the work I have done with others, and learning from them about their work. I have offered many short courses, pre-conference sessions and workshops over the years, focusing on various aspects of my commitment to experiential learning. Some have been about experiential learning in the workplace in which I was teaching others how to run experiential learning in the classroom, such as the Marble Company or Simcorp, simulated organizations that I designed with Lea Stewart at Rutgers. Many have been on a variety of other experiential topics, including in most recent years, the role of experience in reducing dangerous drinking on the college campus. One simulation game that I designed, Image That!, is used by health services and faculty in various departments at more than 300 colleges and universities nationally and in Canada. I have given pre-conference sessions to help others learn the method and adapt it to their own learning and teaching needs.

My commitments and individual goals are tied directly to the pedagogical approaches that are inherent in experiential learning. I see NCA and other professional associations in many ways as instances of experiential learning; we learn from one another in the context of our conferences how to be professionals and what it means to be communication scholars and teachers. In this way, I see professional societies as our metaphorical families: socializing each new generation into the ways and wisdom of those who came before them and also learning from the newest generations those things the older generations need to know not to be left behind. The notion that drives and has driven my commitment to my work in any professional association is the concept that as communication teacher-scholars we are a family. We are a complex family with many different branches on the family tree. And we even fight and argue heatedly at times. But we are bound to one another by heritage and tradition and need to protect and respect those connections even while articulating among ourselves the differences that we have.

All along the way in my career, I have always had the good fortune working closely with other women academics. This was true at each of the institutions at which I worked, St. John's University, Nassau Community College, William Paterson University, and Rutgers University. In

the early days of my career, many of these women served as mentors or role models. At St. John's it was Orie Wittek, at Nassau Community College, Pat Stack and at William Paterson there were several women who like myself were relatively new to faculty positions and partnered with one another in learning bout Paterson.

As my career has progressed my connections with faculty women have continued in more collaborative ways. At Rutgers, since 1980 when the chair of the department, Brent Ruben, asked Lea Stewart and me to team-teach a course, Lea and I have had a collaboration and friendship that has spanned several avenues of our teaching and research interests. In the 1980s we worked in the area of organizational communication and created and disseminated simulations of complex organizations, such as the Marble Company, that became part of the curriculum and/or data collection methods in colleges and universities across the country. In fact, Lea and I were in an airport one day and met someone who had been trained in using the Marble Company at an NCA conference. To both our delight and chagrin we learned that he was on his way to some exotic sounding country to use the Marble Company to help address some organizational communication issues in a new company there! In the 1990s Lea and I have collaborated with a team of Rutgers professional staff from the Rutgers Health Services, consisting primarily of women. Our collaborative partnership has yielded almost $1,000,000 in funding for research projects in its first four years.

I have worked collaboratively with women while I was an administrator at Rutgers and during all the work I have done in professional associations. Some of the members of the profession who seem almost like relatives to me are women I have worked with over the years on committees and councils of ECA, NCA, and ACA. And I have often been struck by the competence and efficiency of these women and how differently we work with one another to accomplish a task than men and women work with one another. I say this despite the fact that I have had many wonderful men with whom I have worked who have also been mentors and role models for me. The most influential of these men have been my chair when I was an instructor and assistant professor at Nassau Community College, Wes Jensby, Dick Budd and Brent Ruben at Rutgers, and Jim Chesebro who mentored me in my role as President of ECA and Editor of Communication Quarterly. All have taught me the ropes and been mentors and guides. But the quality of the collaborative relationships that I have had with the women with whom I have worked over the years has been different. I'd probably describe it as less hierarchical and therefore more like what goes on in my kitchen after a large holiday meal when the women in the family gather to get the dishes done together.

In 1998, when I was a member of the Legislative Council, I was nominated to run for 2nd VP of NCA. At the time I was in my fifties, had finished a decade of serving in administrative positions at Rutgers, and felt able to dedicate and devote my time and energy to the presidency of the Association should I have won the election. I was married at the time to my second husband, Louis Salomone. We had been married for five years at the time of the campaign and were beginning the process of seeking a divorce.

My opponent in the campaign for the 2nd Vice Presidency, and the eventual winner of the election, was James Applegate of Kentucky. Jim had run and previously lost to Sharon Ratliffe. Jim and I traveled to all the regional associations, talking about our visions for the discipline. Our visions had much in common. And we were quite collegial during the campaign. I heard Jim speak dozens of times at business meetings and on Meet-the-Candidate opportunities around the country during the campaign and I learned something very interesting from him about rhetoric and gender. Jim used the rhetorical strategy of reminding the audience each time he spoke of how hurtful the loss had been to him when he ran previously and about how he'd be

devastated if he lost again. It was a rhetorical strategy that a woman could never have used successfully.

While I was disappointed when I lost the election, I had no regrets. I'd had the opportunity to articulate my vision for the Association, to travel to all the regions and meet colleagues I'd never met, and to contribute as best I could to the continued health of NCA. I had been motivated to serve as president because I thought that the times were absolutely ripe for Communication to achieve a deeper level of recognition in the academy that it had yet been able to yet achieve. I wanted to serve and to build on the success of those who'd contributed to the Association before me. Coming from Rutgers where we had established the first graduate program in Communication and Information Studies in the country, I was well steeped in addressing the issues of the Age of Information and Communication. I wanted to make what contributions I could to helping the discipline and its scholars achieve more recognition both inside and outside the academy; and I wanted to put more emphasis on the pedagogy and our contributions as good teachers to the academy. My message was about the Age of Information and Communication and how vital it was for our profession to have a central seat at the table as we moved into the next century, one so dominated by communications technology. My metaphor was the family. It has always been my way of seeing myself in relation to my colleagues and allows me to build rapport and good working relationships with colleagues, and perhaps most of all, have a respect and appreciation for others' contributions.

As I reflect back on what I brought to that endeavor I see myself as using my intellectual strengths and rhetorical skills to articulate ideas that resonated with many of the association members, and to express the importance of valuing the differences among our vast array of special interests and areas of expertise. I also had and continue to have a sense of humor and it's not a bad character trait for anyone coping with the complexities of academia. If I had to identify the credibility problems that were associated with my candidacy, I would say that they were related to name recognition. I had been far more active in highly visible ways in my regional association. And the fact that my own work focused primarily on pedagogy and experiential learning meant that I was not well known across enough of a spectrum in the Association. As our discipline grows and diversifies this is likely to be one of the challenges for many candidates. And it was one of the themes of my campaign: to look for ways to focus and communicate within the Association and across sub-specialty lines.

I see the Presidency of NCA as an important role symbolically. Particularly for a woman. Our discipline has always had the good fortunate to have strong, dedicated and competent women in our ranks. For these women to achieve visible leadership roles has been more of a challenge. When a woman leads a national association such as ours it is a powerful signal to all the women in the profession and to our male colleagues as well. Using the metaphor of the family once again, a woman leading the family reminds us that strength and leadership and commitment are characteristics associated with individuals rather than with gender.

When I was in graduate school my mentor, Madge Kramer, did something to help me finish my degree early so that I could take a teaching job I had been offered. When I asked her what I could do to repay her efforts on my behalf she said, "Pass it on." I have had many experiences over the years in which I did something for someone else thinking to myself of Madge. I have even told others who have tried to thank me the same thing Madge told me. All of us who serve our Association and take leadership roles in service are passing it on for the generations to come.