

History Has Its Eyes on You

*By Karen Stiles, SM(ASCP)^{CM} Nebraska Public Health Laboratory
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Alexander Hamilton asked of Aaron Burr in the Broadway production “If you stand for nothing, what’ll you fall for?” During this pandemic, the laboratory is in the forefront. We could ask the same as Christal Lane, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} LeConte Medical Center, Sevierville TN shares in her ASCLS Today article, HISTORY HAS ITS EYES ON YOU. What are you doing to improve the environment for the laboratory? For patient care and improved patient outcomes? Are you actively involved in promoting agendas that call for increases quality of patient results by the implementation of higher standards for certification and licensure?

As Nebraska laboratorians, we have an opportunity to rise and shine! We can be advocates for our profession and what we do for patient care! We may not always get credit, sometimes even forgotten. The pandemic has proven that laboratory is most needed to diagnose the new emerging disease, differentiate them from the current endemic pathogens circulating in our communities and provide grounds on which a physician determines his treatment. Here is where we can stress proper specimen collection and transport as part of the pre-analytical process because it reflects in the quality of laboratory output, called patient results. Now is the time to demand quality, even though the world demands quantity.

Christal shares that all laboratorians should take a bow! They have worked long hours, many weekends, nights and for the first time, the general public knows what PCR is, and even performs the rapid lateral flow tests at home! Hopefully, they see the burden that the laboratory has taken on! WE can do this if we stand for something!!

Take a moment and read Ms. Lane’s article in the ASCLS Today. It couldn’t have been better said! Let history see us as heroes! See next page.

<https://ascls.org/history-has-its-eyes-on-you/> [ascls.org]

Christal Lane, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, ASCLS Ascending Professionals Forum



Let me set the stage for you ... The year is 2020. It's early in the year, around January. Laboratory professionals in their morning huddles gather to hear their laboratory directors bring up the new "novel" virus coming out of Wuhan, China. Nothing too unusual—the CDC is keeping an eye on it, and it's a wonderful time for a CE opportunity about MERS and SARS.

Fast forward 20 months. In that time, we have seen countless waves, new variants, the emergence of multiple vaccines, and have seen the worst occur as the hands that once saved countless lives couldn't seem to put an end to the ceaseless stream of death.

But that's not all that happened in those 20 months.

In the beautiful comeback stories of triumph over disease, we as a profession began to see that what we once considered "behind the closed curtain" work was now on the forefront. Sure, maybe the news agency didn't get our titles quite right or nailed down exactly what we do, but for once, the public had its eyes on *us*.

This is our moment of truth, and as one Alexander Hamilton once asked Aaron Burr in Lin-Manuel Miranda's hit musical, *Hamilton*, I now ask you: "If you stand for nothing, [Burr], what'll you fall for?" What are you doing to improve the environment for the laboratory? For patient care and improved patient outcomes? Are you actively involved in the grassroots of ASCLS and in promoting agendas that call for increased quality of patient results by the implementation of higher standards for certification and/or licensure?

My fellow #labvocates, take a moment to take your bow.

When you dispel another COVID-19 myth or rumor on social media, you are being a #labvocate. When you post about your vaccine, you're being a #labvocate. When you reach out to your facility's administration about pay equality and recognition of the advanced degrees of our professionals, you are being a #labvocate. By calling for a recollect to ensure the best results for our patients, you are being a #labvocate. By attending conferences put on by our professional organizations, such as ASCLS, you are being a #labvocate and being given an opportunity to share your voice and your opinion. The Laboratory Legislative Symposium, a multi-organizational effort to create a unified voice for the laboratory, is a perfect opportunity to not just learn how to be a #labvocate but the perfect opportunity to put that knowledge into action.

This moment may not feel like a win, but it is. History is painting us as the heroes, so I leave you with this, what will you stand for?

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Statue of Alexander Hamilton in front of the U.S. Treasury Building in Washington, D.C.

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"What are you doing to improve the environment for the laboratory?"