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# INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

*Gene McMurtry, Chairman*

*National Public Policy Education Committee*

The Black Hills of South Dakota have provided us with a unique setting for our twenty-first national conference. The conference speakers are also unique in their ability to stimulate and challenge each of us to reach out into new and meaningful areas. Based on the belief that the new name would more clearly reflect our areas of interest, in 1970 we changed our name from National Agricultural Policy Committee.

Each year, the audience at this conference sponsored by our committee includes a number of new persons who are here as professionals in this broad area of public policy education. I extend to you a special welcome. I believe your association with this group will be one of the most stimulating experiences of your professional career. I have personally found this to be so. I urge you to become acquainted with your colleagues at this conference. You will find them most stimulating and always willing to lend a helpful hand.

The program committee, in setting up this conference, had three broad objectives: (1) providing timely and useful information on public policy issues, (2) providing methodology for implementing educational programs, and (3) sharing ideas and meaningful experiences. Both the program committee and the national committee have been in the forefront in recognizing and defining important policy issues. Individual members from this conference have provided counsel to national leaders responsible for legislation and implementation of meaningful public affairs programs. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the Farm Foundation for the guidance and financial support it has given to public policy education work in the United States.

Another aspect of the impact of these national conferences has been the publication of the proceedings. Most of you have a library of these proceedings. Perhaps some of your issues have become dog-eared and worn, as mine have. These proceedings go to every county agent in the United States and are widely used as reference sources in local areas of public policy education.

Most of us who have worked in public policy education have developed a clientele with whom we touch base. An ability to touch base in terms of ideas and policy proposals has greatly increased our credibility and performance as policy educators. While we influence the thoughts and actions of our clientele, they also influence ours.

Will our clientele of the 1960's be adequate for the 1970's? Probably not. Our clientele for the 1970's will be key community leaders and youth, who have a feel for state-wide issues. State government will play a much more dominant role and will need to deal with such public policy issues as area planning, financing local government, job opportunities, pollution, and environment. The challenge is for each of us to develop effective means of reaching these leaders so that our educational programs can continue to be sound and relevant.

Changes in our society have altered the opportunities and responsibilities of those of us who work in public policy education. The related and interdependent problems of our states must be tackled with a realistic orientation to the economic and social relationships of the 1970's.

Our response has been, "Have methodology; will tackle problems," and in a sense, this is what we have done on many public policy issues. This approach clearly has been successful. However, as we tackle problems outside the field in which we have our background and training, we feel some hesitancy and uncertainty. We must stretch our imaginations to meet the challenge and be willing to use our time-tested approach in new and different ways.

The impact of any individual conference is difficult to measure. But those of us who have had the privilege of attending a number of conferences can look back and see great strides in public policy education. These conferences and their associated activities have played a major role in the development of meaningful educational efforts in the United States.

I hope that the discussion and the exchange of ideas at the conference will be a very rich and rewarding experience. The resulting educational programs with which each of you will work in the months ahead, are designed to inform responsible citizens of public policy alternatives so they can participate more intelligently and effectively in formulating beneficial policies.

PART I

*Who Makes National  
Policy?*

