**Division 17 Fellow Statement**

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**Overview**

I feel privileged to offer this statement as a Division 17 Fellow. Indeed, given my nontraditional background en route to this award - a private practitioner without a formal, binding academic affiliation – I am especially grateful to those who encouraged and facilitated my efforts.

Since I would not have attained Fellow status without the support of many special people, I believe it proper to begin by acknowledging and thanking them. I will also feature career achievements I believe hallmark my professional record.

God has been especially good to me. I grew up in a loving home, and was encouraged to pursue my dreams and develop my potential. Perhaps just as important, my parents impressed on me the value of human service.

As an adult, my wife, Jean, has been most instrumental in my career development. We married in July 1982, and I began doctoral studies in counseling psychology at Florida State University the following month. Throughout my education and professional development, Jean has been there for me – from processing my graduate school application to typing my dissertation and helping to grow my practice. Simply put, without her love, encouragement, and input, my career would not be.

My counseling psychologist identity derives from my training and specialization, career development, a taproot of counseling psychology. I have been blessed with many outstanding professors and mentors; they illuminated opportunities and provided invaluable developmental experiences. Especially influential were Dr. Joyce Chick, who introduced me to forensic consultation, along with Drs. James Sampson, Brian McMahon, Gary Peterson, and Robert Reardon.

Finally, I would be remiss not to mention Dr. Sharon Bowman. She provided constructive feedback on my efforts to become a Fellow, and encouraged me to persist.

**Contributions to Counseling Psychology**

Exposure to forensic consultation while in graduate school led to my interest in the interface between psychology and the justice system. As my career evolved, I developed a specialization in vocational psychology and established a forensic practice.

Time and professional experience, increased appreciation and understanding of the inner-workings of the justice system – including, from my perspective, its shortcomings in promoting objective decision making – and increased sophistication as an expert witness shaped my commitment to facilitate the truth-finding process by developing methods to promote objective decision making in jurisprudence.

My aim has been to address those who have a stake in the civil justice system: psychologists and related practitioners specializing in vocational assessment, lawyers and judges, insurance adjusters, jurors, claimants, and the public. The initiatives in which I take particular pride include:

* Founding Career Consultants of America, Inc., a Private Practice
* Publication of *Assessment of Earning Capacity*
* Publication of the *Earning Capacity Assessment Form*
* Development and Publication of a Vocational Assessment Theory Article
* Publication of *A Claimant’s Guide to Understanding and Presenting Injury Damages: A Damages Expert’s Perspective*
* Publication of *Justice Indicted*

Career Consultants of America, Inc.

My objective while pursuing a doctoral degree in counseling psychology was to found a practice from which I could provide expert witness services. At the same time, I sought to establish a venue to further my research, training, and publication interests. My overarching aim was, and remains, to practice as an ethical, competent, and objective leader in my areas of specialization: career development and vocational psychology.

I founded Career Consultants of America, Inc., (CCA) in May 1986. Headquartered in Tampa, Florida, the practice has since been providing services throughout North America and worldwide. CCA has grown to become a respected, profitable practice, employing up to 15 people, and known nationally and internationally for its forensic consulting expertise. Individuals seeking private services, health care providers, nonprofit and private-sector organizations, lawyers, and insurance companies have been among CCA’s clients.

In addition to a venue to provide expert witness services, CCA has spawned a significant amount of research. This research has focused on computer-assisted career guidance applications, assessment of earning capacity, and forensic issues related to claims of loss of earning capacity.

Data from the practice has had broad applications – including development of a standardized instrument practitioners world-wide use to evaluate claims of loss of earning capacity (the Earning Capacity Assessment Form-2, discussed below), establishing normative criteria for making corporate selection decisions (CCA has evaluated over 2,000 candidates for internal promotion and new hire in 4 continents), and the bases for a doctoral dissertation. As a training venue, CCA has facilitated interns’ and residents’ development of administrative support, clinical, and research skills.

*Assessment of Earning Capacity*

*Assessment of Earning Capacity* is a textbook I initially published in 2001. Lawyers and Judges Publishing Company, the publisher, released the second edition in 2004, the third edition in 2011, and the fourth edition in 2015.

Vocational psychologists and vocational rehabilitation expert witnesses, lawyers, judges, insurance appraisers, and graduate students have been the book’s primary consumers. *Assessment of Earning Capacity* aims to promote precision and objectivity in matters that involve the valuation of earning capacity. It presents a model for conducting an assessment of earning capacity, outlines evaluation methodologies, and addresses venue-specific issues (e.g., personal injury, medical malpractice, marriage dissolution, product liability).

The *Earning Capacity Assessment Form*

My commitment to promote objective, systematic, and competent practice among vocational experts and, by extension, furthering the judicial ideal of finding the truth, undergirded my efforts to develop the Earning Capacity Assessment Form (ECAF).

Three decades of published empirical research, along with my clinical and expert witness experiences, led me to develop the ECAF and ECAF-2. The ECAF-2 is the only standardized, peer-reviewed instrument developed to facilitate vocational experts’ assessments of claims of loss of earning capacity.

Vocational Assessment Theory

My clinical experiences, research, and expert witness practice enabled me to develop a theory on evaluating claims of loss of earning capacity: Earning Capacity Assessment Theory (ECAT). The theory integrates methodological guidelines I specified in *Assessment of Earning Capacity* and the ECAF-2 provides a means to operationalize ECAT, thereby infusing science into the manner forensic vocational evaluations are conducted.

ECAT offers an objective, comprehensive, and systematic means to facilitate truth finding. Practitioners worldwide rely on ECAT when conducting assessments and cite it in courts of law when questioned about the bases for their opinions.

*A Claimant’s Guide to Understanding and Presenting Injury Damages: A Damages Expert’s Perspective*

Having evaluated claimed vocational damages as an expert witness for over 30 years, I gained considerable insight into civil and federal court dynamics. Claimants, from my experiences, have little awareness of the litigation process and how claims are assessed.

The American Bar Association published *A Claimant’s Guide to Understanding and Presenting Injury Damages: A Damages Expert’s Perspective* in 2012. *Injury Damages* aims to guide people who (a) acquired legitimate injuries through no or little fault of their own, (b) seek fair compensation for acquired disabling problems, and (c) are pursuing litigation with concomitant damages claims.

In *Injury Damages*, I explain how the litigation process evolves – from pre-suit demands to trial and appeals – and describe stakeholders’ interests. I also address context issues, such as the adversarial environment characteristic of litigation, and provide suggestions for presenting a claim.

*Justice Indicted*

Throughout humankind, people with disabilities have been outcast, disenfranchised, and subjected to lifelong difficulties with accessibility, stigmatization, financial burden, and exploitation, often relegating them to a permanent underclass. Our judicial system, unfortunately, enables lawyers to place their interests ahead of these citizens and, ironically, the truth-finding process.

Like *Injury Damages*, *Justice Indicted* derives from experiences as an expert witness, providing analyses and testimony in high-stakes litigation. A work of fiction, *Justice Indicted* aims to both entertain readers and provide a story through which I elucidate behind-the-scenes tactics employed during litigation – many of which are incongruent with promoting justice. *Justice Indicted,* published in 2013, is a social commentary.

Throughout the novel the truth-finding process is tested secondary to multiple parties’ self-gain interests - often masked under the guise of advocacy. *Justice Indicted* addresses the challenges people with disabilities encounter and advocates reformation of a justice system in which abuses of our most disadvantaged citizens too often occur.

**Other Contributions**

My publication record includes textbooks, book chapters, research studies, conceptual articles, self-help books (one translated into Italian), a standardized test, and a novel. I have also served on multiple editorial boards.

The leadership experiences I have had include serving as the 1997 – 1998 president of the National Career Development Association, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of a large (10,000 member) chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Additionally, I have had two gubernatorial appointments to the Florida Rehabilitation Council.

In addition to the American Psychological Association, the National Career Development Association and the International Association of Life Care Planners have extended me Fellow status. Other significant professional recognition I have received includes national awards from the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association, National Career Development Association, and National Rehabilitation Association.

**Summary**

Throughout my career I have attempted to apply the research-practitioner model underlying my training as a counseling psychologist. I am grateful to God and to the many people who selflessly supported my interests and development.