

## **Award for Distinguished Contributions to Tess Kirsch**

Steve Oshrin, Ph.D.  
University of Southern Mississippi

The first award to be presented this evening is the Award for Distinguished Contributions. This award is designed to recognize significant and sustained contributions to the Council that have enhanced the Council's ability to serve its membership or which have effectively enriched academic education in communication sciences and disorders.

For each of us there is one person who knows us better than anyone else. Perhaps better than we know ourselves. That confidant may be a parent, a spouse, a sibling, a friend. That special person, who knows us so well, knows our weaknesses as well as our strengths, our qualities as well as our limitations and our potential for success as well as our potential for failure. It is human nature for us to want to project only our best qualities and to hide our flaws.

In many ways, the positive image that we want our programs to project is similar to that which we, as individuals, seek to project. And like that special person who knows us so well, our organization is fortunate to have a confidant who helps our programs evaluate themselves in an honest, forthright and objective manner. One who listens to our problems, thoughtfully considers our opinions, and offers advice, encouragement and constructive criticism. One who is nine parts Dear Abby and one part Dr. Laura.

The reputation of our profession is dependent upon the quality of our academic programs. To a large degree, the task of quality assurance is assumed by volunteers. Were their efforts not well coordinated and well managed, however, it would be impossible to maintain the high standards that the profession and the public have come to expect. Our 2001 Award for Distinguished Contributions goes to the individual whose management skills,

organizational ability and sensitivity to the diverse needs of a diverse discipline makes it possible to meet these challenges and makes her ASHA's Accreditation Manager extraordinaire, Tess Kirsch.