

Todd – Researcher, Writer, And Speaker

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For the very few unfamiliar with his history, Todd was born near me, in Muscatine, Iowa. He moved to Iowa City for college in 1985, stayed for his master's degree, and finished his PhD in 1994. History might suggest he studied with me, but the reality was that we studied together, having joined the faculty at the University of Iowa myself as a fresh PhD in 1988. As his clinic supervisor for a few years, I can attest that the patients loved this tall male, with his nervous laugh. And from his clinical experiences, he found lots to question and eventually study in his subsequent career.

However, a few behind-the-scenes stories seem appropriate as Todd reaches the pinnacle of his outstanding career. For example, he was not a favored student by some faculty in his earliest years. The number of times I heard another professor begrudge his (Todd's) failure to take any notes during lectures...while sitting up front and staring at the speaker of the moment. The thing they were most annoyed about - I think - was that he very easily aced every exam. One professor could hardly believe the in-depth answer when that level of "depth" had never been carried out in the classroom lectures. Another clinical instructor noted Todd's ability to communicate at the level of any young client, sometimes to a fault when he'd get so engrossed in the video games being used in "therapy" that he'd forget the session's objective! (See pic of young Todd during an AR session).



Todd Ricketts has been a prolific researcher, writer, AND public speaker. His uncanny ability to understand the intricacies of current flow, microphone assembly and other such banes of my existence are noteworthy. Though his writing is legend as “improving with time and practice,” his logic and people skills have always been strong. My own personal and most recent collaboration has been the writing of three volumes of hearing aid text (along with Gus Mueller). Although it took about 12 years to get the first of the series to press, several things were very clear: Todd had the knowledge base, Gus had the writing skills, and I had a good lab manager (Elizabeth) who did all the graphics, copyediting, and so on. The team worked well (see attached trio photo in each book), and the other two continued to update and correct each text. Those were hard days, in terms of output productivity; those were also the best day in terms of socialization with two of the funniest, committed, over-achievers of my life. Wherever we (or some of us) were in the world, we would find time to strategize, plot, plan, assign, and goof off together.



The social skills that Todd holds are likely due to his Iowa-nice roots. Born and raised in a small river community, his EQ was as innate as his IQ. His dad, Ted, was a regular in our lab, until he was deemed ineligible due to his practiced-subject reputation. Even during his travels, Todd's tall, good-looking easy style provided many otherwise unavailable opportunities. At a fairly stuffy Acoustical Society meeting in Cancun some 20+ years ago, he was said to commandeer a pirate ship and all of their rum punch...the pirates even joined the party ultimately.



I miss my time and interactions with Todd. Still, I relive them vicariously through his current published activities as academician, administrator, researcher, and author.