It's the first summer of this new millennium, and we approach the beginning of a new school year. Thinking about fresh starts reminds me of how excited I was, 35 years ago, to receive my degree and start working. I needed no job-search skills, because jobs were numerous. All 3 laboratory supervisors in my hometown were searching for medical technologists and called me. Two departments where I received my training offered me positions. I based my first job choice on interests and because the people in that department had been fun to be around and cared about me. I was flying high when I got my first monthly paycheck of $350.

Throughout most of my career as an educator, the excitement of new graduates has been one of my greatest rewards. Few graduates have had difficulty in finding positions, even during the recent downsizing period.

Hearing about the accomplishments of graduates has also been rewarding. Some accepted the challenge of managing rural laboratories. Other graduates spread their entrepreneurial wings and built careers with computer companies and consulting organizations. Others aspired to medical school. One graduate was accepted at a prestigious law school and was told that her unique educational background was a contributing factor. I am proud of our profession when I look at the accomplishments of the young people I have worked with. A career path taken is not what is important. What is important is finding a pathway for each of us to achieve our own unique goals. Our profession stands tall in this regard.

Once again we are experiencing a shortage of personnel and graduates—similar to the time when I entered the profession. A colleague recently remarked that it is scary to think about who will do our laboratory tests as we age and need more medical care. A recent comment on a listserv said that the only place with an excess of laboratory personnel is Japan and that maybe we can do our laboratory tests as we age and need more medical care. A recent comment on a listserv said that the only place with an excess of laboratory personnel is Japan and that maybe we can do our laboratory tests as we age and need more medical care. A recent comment on a listserv said that the only place with an excess of laboratory personnel is Japan and that maybe we can do our laboratory tests as we age and need more medical care. A recent comment on a listserv said that the only place with an excess of laboratory personnel is Japan and that maybe we can do our laboratory tests as we age and need more medical care.

We need to value the individuals entering our profession. They are full of enthusiasm and, yes, in some cases, unrealistic expectations. Most need mentoring. If we do not assist them in using their talents and realizing their goals, the profession will lose many of them.

Share this issue of Laboratory Medicine. Encourage them to become involved in the activities and opportunities offered by the ASCP. We welcome these new graduates—and look forward to their involvement and future contributions.