Like all presidents before me, I struggled trying to decide what to say. I turned to past presidents and their addresses for guidance, and I heard a lot about the traditions of our Society. While many former presidents provided input and some even lamented that they would like to revise their remarks, none offered to actually help me write mine. To future presidents in the room, please remember that I will also be a traditionalist soon.

I am and have been all year a strong advocate of the hyphenated actuary concept. I call myself an actuary-casualty and think of all of you in the same way. We know that we are part of the broader actuarial profession, but we tend to focus on the casualty specialty of that profession. While that focus may be appropriate at most times, I am fearful that, by thinking of ourselves in such a narrow way, we may be losing sight of the rest of the world.

We do not live in a monastery, but rather in a world cluttered with regulation, financial ramifications and social issues. Yet perhaps we should remember the concept articulated by Cassian in the fifth century and embellished by St. Thomas Aquinas in their advices to monastery monks. Seven deadly sins were enumerated as the chief obstacles to perfection. These deadly sins can be distinguished not so much by their gravity, but by their power to generate even more misdeeds. As actuaries-casualty in the Casualty Actuarial Society, we have been striving for the last 76 years for perfection. Let’s examine how we relate to these seven deadly sins.
DEADLY SIN #1—PRIDE

It is best defined as "inordinate self-esteem." Although we are guilty of this sin, we rationalize that it is a virtue as well and is justified. We are proud of our profession and pleased that it was ranked number one by an outside objective source. We take pride in our work and well we should because it is filled with creativity. We are pleased with our Society's growth, its uniqueness, and its independence. I personally swelled with pride as I travelled this year from the Seattle Space Needle, to the Alamo in San Antonio, to the Inn at Sturbridge Village, visiting our regional affiliates and seeing so many students eager to learn and enter this profession, so many competent actuaries seeking to further their education, and so many potential leaders for our Society. My crystal ball clearly displays only a bright future for the CAS.

But we must not be so blinded by our pride that we diminish the value of other specialty groups of actuaries or of other professions; that we erect artificial barriers of entry to our own specialty group; or that we overlook the incompetence of some actuaries. We are spending resources wisely to establish standards of practice. When these standards are violated—and unfortunately that is inevitable—we must take the necessary disciplinary actions, as distasteful as those actions may be. If we fail to, we will have little to be proud of as a professional society.

DEADLY SIN #2—COVETOUSNESS

This is best described as "an inordinate desire for wealth or possessions." While I cannot name too many spendthrifts in our group, I cannot label us as sinners in this regard. We despise the evil associated with waste and therefore attempt to establish insurance rating systems that are efficient and accurate, but we are not greedy. The excess profits laws in several states make certain of that.

Our main wealth is in our knowledge, and we readily share that with others. Our Society membership is open to all who wish to study for exams, our literature is freely available, and our seminars are open to
nonmembers, although we do levy a modest surcharge. No, if misers are what we are, then counting would be our main pleasure, and that we know is the domain of another profession, while analysis is reserved for actuaries.

DEADLY SIN #3—LUST

If I were brave, I would use the definition that is fairly common—manly necessity—but I fear that that would disturb the female Fellows (one of my favorite oxymorons) in our Society. Instead, I will define it as “unlawful passion” and again, without taking a straw poll, I will say that we fail as sinners here. What we have done instead, through an extraordinary act of will, has been to transform this “unlawful passion” that is innate to all of us, into “lawful passion” and then display our lust openly.

We lust for our work—not only to stay busy but to succeed at it. We yearn for the right answer or for the best answer possible, given the limitations of data and tools. Look around the room and guess at how often the person seated next to you has stayed up until 3 in the morning working on a personal computer to solve a problem that appeared unsolvable. Oh, if only we used these lustful energies and hours differently, our profession too could have been the subject of a prime time TV series.

DEADLY SIN #4—ANGER

I define it as rage or desire for vengeance or, if anger can be righteous, then maybe justice. But guess what? We fail miserably as sinners here again. Perhaps we have become very good at controlling our anger, as we’ve often had to when testifying as expert witnesses and being abused on cross examination. But we don’t display anger even when we should. I’ll use IBNR as my example.

For years we have accepted “qualified loss reserve specialist” (QLRS) as the description of one who can be allowed to determine IBNR reserves, when we knew that “actuary” should be in that definition. Even with the change this year to the term “qualified actuary” (QA), we accepted add-
ons to that definition to make it not too difficult for others to intrude into our professional specialty. We know that only with the proper basic education, continuing education, and experience can one accurately determine the reserves needed to pay ultimate liabilities. And yet, we allow others to practice this purest form of casualty actuarial science without a license. Other professions would not stand for this, and we should not either. I am not recommending that you throw things, as I have been known to do on occasion, but make it clear that you’re mad as hell and not going to stand for it anymore!

DEADLY SIN #5—GLUTTONY

“Overindulgence to the point of absurdity.” The word “too” is very important here—whether too much or too eagerly or too expensively or with too much ado. Notwithstanding our performance last night at the cocktail reception, I cannot classify us as sinners here either.

We use terms like range of reasonableness and margins for error to prevent us from going to extremes. And while we very much want our Society to grow, we are content to do so from within and not to cannibalize other societies. We must retain respect for other specialty groups or actuaries, yet maintain our distance from them, and should insist on similar treatment. To misquote from a famous Shakespearean character, our motto should be “neither an acquirer, nor an acquiree be!”

But we should seek to expand our horizons in the next decade, without being gluttonous. The CAS name is not well known internationally and it should be. We must improve our visibility overseas in the 1990s.

DEADLY SIN #6—ENZY

It’s easily defined as jealousy—petty or otherwise. Let’s not kid ourselves—we have all experienced it. The first time probably was as a student when we failed an actuarial exam while watching someone else in our study group pass. And in our careers, I’ll bet there have been a few occasions when we’ve vied for a particular position or for a particular
client and finished second best. But we've managed to overcome those disappointments and continue to work together successfully on CAS committees—a tribute to true professionals.

No, we have not let envy overwhelm us—if we had, we would never be creators, only imitators. But, we must learn to deal better with others who envy us. We are well thought of by the insurance industry that we serve and by other actuarial specialty groups and other professionals. We are very much in demand. And why not? What other profession, other than fortune tellers, does as well as we do in predicting the future?

**DEADLY SIN #7—SLOTH**

This is "disinclination to action or labor" and is not characteristic of us at all. Instead of indolence, we exhibit hyper-activity. We try to stay too busy, not only in our work, but in our professional society responsibilities as well; and yet we never hide behind that simple fact. In truth, our slogan is: "When you want something done, give it to a busy Fellow (or Associate)."

The point is, our Society runs because you make it run. It is only through our volunteer efforts that anything gets done. My advice to the new Fellows and new Associates in the room is to get involved and stay involved. The meritocracy works—keep it going!

That completes the 7 deadly sins. If the sins are deadly to us as individuals, they are no less deadly to our Society. But I hope I have convinced you that, while not perfect, we can hardly be classified as "sinners."

This quest for perfection began 76 years ago. Some say the CAS's basic mission has not changed much. Thomas Jefferson recognized the necessity for institutions to change many years ago in a letter to a friend: "... institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times."
I maintain that the CAS has kept pace with the times. Our three primary functions—giving exams, sponsoring meetings, and stimulating research—remain, but through the years, we have strived for more, better, and different.

There are more exams today than before—even without partitioning—because the subject matter to be mastered is greater. The Syllabus is different because society needs actuaries to know different things. And the exams are more rigorous—ask anyone who has taken one recently. We have improved in this area and will continue to do so.

Our meetings are more plentiful—seminars are given on many new topics and regional affiliates are providing additional forums. We didn’t need an Environmental Issues seminar in the early days of the CAS, but we need one now. And the meetings are much more professionally run with the advances in technology that have been made. I predict a videoconference meeting soon.

Research remains the area of high visibility. Computer technology should make our modeling processes better, and our call papers are on new and different subjects. The Global Issues Discussion Paper Program for next Spring could not have been issued by our founding fathers. And your Board of Directors has recently approved a major funding expenditure for 1991 to stimulate even more research, so good things are in store for us.

In researching our Proceedings, I noticed that a former President in his Presidential Address some 20 years ago, predicted that a merger of the various actuarial societies into one society was inevitable. That did not occur and it will not occur. Whether we keep our name as the Casualty Actuarial Society or change it one day to the Society of Actuaries-Casualty, we will retain our uniqueness and our independence.

But preserving our independence requires cohesion among ourselves. On this point, I offer to all of us the following words from Benjamin Franklin: “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.”
And now, please let me close by thanking a few individuals.

Thanks to my family for accepting the demands on my time this past year.

Thanks to my employer, ISO, for also accepting the demands on my time this year.

Thanks to the 1990 Executive Council, not only for their hard work, but also for their patience and guidance. They are symbolic of not just the Executive Council, but also the Board, the Committee Chairmen, and so many of you who served on committees or task forces.

Thanks to Kathy Spicer, not only as a representative of the CAS office, but also for being my tangible legacy to the CAS. I hired her as CAS Meeting Planner 3 years ago; and she has made our meetings much more professional and, as a result, has made my hiring decision look very good.

And thanks to Denise De Angelis for being my partner in all this not just this year, but for the past 14 years. She knows only too well that I could not have done it without her.

And lastly, thanks to all of you—the CAS membership—for giving me the privilege and the pleasure to serve as President of the Society I love.