



Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the Physician Assistant History Society

Message from the President

Alfred M. Sadler, Jr., MD

As always, there is much to report, and this newsletter is filled with important nuggets about our profession.

I am thrilled to report that the **PAHx Historian Toolkit** was completed in September and is available on the Society's website, as the next offering for Associates of the Society (in addition to the Educational Toolkit). The Historian Toolkit is designed to help PA programs and AAPA constituent organizations record their history. The Toolkit provides guidance in documenting and preserving your organization's history and milestones. It includes facts and suggestions for archiving, organizing important material, conducting oral histories, and links to other valuable sites. Become a Society Associate to access this valuable tool.

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NATIONAL PA WEEK – ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Marilyn H. Fitzgerald, Honorary PA

Earlier this month, October 6 – 12, the PA profession celebrated National PA Week, seven days of celebrating and raising awareness about the profession and its role in keeping us healthy. Established in 1987 as "National PA Day," **Historical Happenings** asked Karen Beauregard Bates, AAPA Public Affairs Administrator in 1987, how and why the event was established.

"As a new staff member at the American Academy of PAs, I learned how Dr. Eugene Stead founded the

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physician assistant profession at Duke Medical Center in 1965, with the first class of PAs graduating on October 6, 1967. October 6th also happened to be Dr. Stead's birthday.



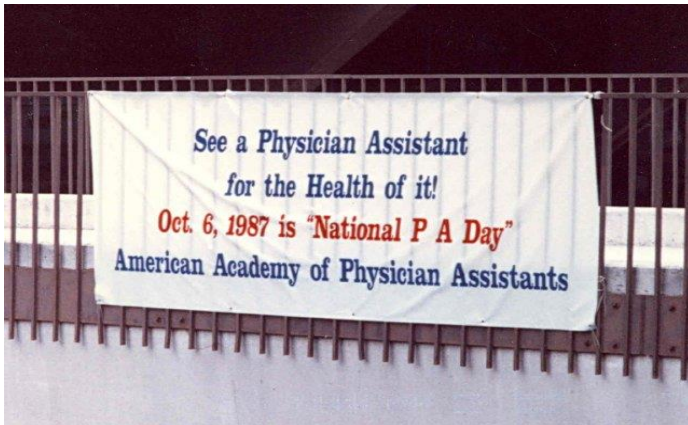
*Stead's 95th birthday in 2003
with student PA, Sarah Holland
(Class '05) – Courtesy DUMC*

In public relations, every special event is an opportunity to celebrate, and to help others learn about your profession or cause. Together with PA volunteers on the AAPA Public Education Committee, (David Larson, Chair; Tom Berry, Susan Perdue, Donna Sewell, James Tanner, Kevin

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Bolan, and Susan Schwartz), we thought, ‘This auspicious date should be a holiday, and we should celebrate its 20th anniversary this year!’



Thus, National PA Day was born. The first year, the AAPA team created a simple logo, stickers for PAs to wear, brief handouts of information about the profession and a banner to hang from a building walkway close to AAPA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. We alerted all the constituent chapters and suggested ways they and their members could participate on this milestone day. We created a sample press release that they could send to their local media, and we reached out to the national media from AAPA headquarters. (This was long before social media, when we still had an entire room dedicated to our mainframe computer and the FAX machine was THE high tech device!)”



In May 2004, the AAPA House of Delegates adopted policy changing PA Day to PA Week --

“The AAPA supports the designation of National PA Week commencing on October 6.”

From modest activities in 1987 to elaborate ones today, PAs spent this past October 6-12 promoting the PA profession. As described on AAPA’s website, *“America’s more than 100,000 certified PAs are a powerful force for better health for millions of patients across the country. Consistently recognized as one of the fastest-growing professions, PAs were ranked the most promising job of 2015 by Forbes.com. Because of PAs, the healthcare system is stronger. Because of PAs, more patients get access to high-quality, cost-effective care. Because of PAs, we celebrate National PA Week.”* <https://www.aapa.org/PAWeek/#Celebrate>

PAs appeared on TV shows (the NBC “Today Show” audience); shared photos on Facebook and Instagram; tweeted thousands of messages of congratulations on Twitter; issued press releases; were interviewed on radio shows; and were honored with proclamations of praise from city mayors, state governors, and local, state and national legislators.



“NBC Today Show” Photograph courtesy of AAPA

PA constituent organizations, PA programs and students engaged in blood drives and volunteered at food banks, homeless shelters and screened patients at local health fairs to bring attention to the profession.

This 28-year-old tradition lives on.

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We have entered a season of celebrations as the PA profession, PA programs, and related organizations reach important anniversaries. Looking back, the 1960's and 1970's were a time of great innovation in the PA profession and in health education more broadly. On October 2, my wife Edi, a FNP and practicing diabetes educator, and I attended the Gala Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Program at the University of Colorado by Henry Silver, MD, and Loretta Ford, RN, EdD. Dr. Silver went on to found the Child Health Associate Program in 1969, which was one of the earliest PA Programs. While there, I also had the chance to visit with and talk PA history at the Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant Program at the University of Colorado and the PA Program at the Red Rocks Community College. Details will appear in the next issue.

Speaking of celebrating milestones, we continue to work with the NCCPA to help recognize the 40th year of granting the PA-C. This certificate has served as the lodestone for every PA graduate and has long been recognized by every state licensing board as the credential for entry to practice.

We will have our **Society's booth at the annual meeting of PAEA in Washington, D.C., next month.** Please come by and let's catch up. We welcome news from all of you.

PA Program Directors:

The annual drive to support the PA History Society is currently underway. With your paid **2015-2016 Educational Research Fee for Program Associates**, your faculty and students will have access to the exclusive **Educational Toolkit** and the **Historian Toolkit**. For more information about all of the PAHx Associate benefits, please visit the Society's website at: <http://pahx.org/become-associate>

Programs Embrace the PAHx Educational Toolkit

The days are cooler, the nights are cold; the leaves are yellow, orange, and red; football is on the weekend calendar. It's Fall! The new students roaming the halls have donned their fresh white coats. In all probability your PA program faculty has again revised the curriculum with new lesson plans. Is "History of the Profession" within the curriculum, and among those lesson plans?

Important dates are upon us. Two years ago PAEA and ARC-PA celebrated their respective 40th anniversaries. This past year NCCPA did the same. The Physician Assistant History Society is now embarked upon a project with the National Library of Medicine to create a traveling exhibit that will celebrate, in 2017, the 50th anniversary of the birth of the PA profession, marked by the graduation of the first three PA students from Duke University. The exhibit will tour high school, college and public libraries for a month at a time for five years. A duplicate exhibit will be available to programs and to constituent organizations for meetings and other celebratory events.

Do your students and graduates know the history of this remarkable profession? It is a key mission of the History Society to provide resources and tools to assist program faculty with sharing the history of the profession with their students.

Resources available from the History Society have long included the robust website, www.pahx.org. In 2013, the Society published *The Physician Assistant: An Illustrated History*, a synthesis of the "timeline" first published on the website with brief biographies, copious photos, graphics, and commentary to put the history in perspective. Earlier this year, we released an "Educational Toolkit," a

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compendium of PowerPoint™ slides, photographs, and video clips that can be integrated into personalized lectures; a series of self-directed learning modules; and a syllabus of major themes that can be explored using the PAHx website. Available only to programs that have joined the Society as “Associates,” the Toolkit has been very well received. A Program Director writes:

...thanks for developing the Educational Toolkit extremely usefulthorough and well organized exceptional pictures and videos....

The Educational Toolkit is free to Associate members of the History Society with their paid Educational Research Fee of \$500. For more information, contact Lori Konopka-Sauer at LoriK@nccpa.net. Support your history; receive the benefits; convey our legacy to your students.

Living Legacies:

Alvin P. Davis, Liberian PA
Reginald D. Carter, PhD, PA, Historian
Emeritus

(Editor’s Note: History is being made every day in the PA profession as PAs reach out to make a difference in urban, rural and international communities. This article is part of a new series on “Living Legacies” highlighting the important work PAs do from the heart.)

In November 2014, Alvin P. Davis, PA became the first healthcare worker to survive treatment at the US Public Health’s Monrovia Medical Unit/Ebola Treatment Unit (MMU ETU). But that was just the beginning...

Mr. Davis graduated in 2011 with an Associate Degree in Physician Assistant Studies from the Tubman National Institute of Medical Arts

(TNIMA), located at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Monrovia, Liberia. In 2013, he began taking classes at the University of Liberia while working part-time in the Goodwill Clinic in Monrovia. While working in the clinic, Mr. Davis contracted the Ebola virus in November 2014 and was transferred to the US Public Health’s MMU/ETU – a treatment unit for healthcare workers. After aggressive medical interventions, he became the first healthcare worker to survive treatment at the MMU ETU.



Photograph of Mr. Davis at the MMU survivor’s wall, courtesy of Capt. Hunter-Buskey

After his discharge on November 27, 2014, Mr. Davis could have simply returned to his family and taken a respite from the Ebola epidemic. Instead, he accepted a position with the Liberian Ministry of Health (MOH) as an Ebola Case Investigator and stayed on to work at the MMU, side by side with the USPHS officers, who had just saved his life. There he returned to the unit’s high-risk zone, risking re-infection to care for and encourage patients through the lonely and terrifying battle against the deadly Ebola virus.

(Living Legacies: Alvin P. Davis continued on page 5)

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In recent months, Mr. Davis has been touring the USA, visiting relatives and serving as an appreciation ambassador, meeting with various groups to express his appreciation for the assistance provided by the USA to Liberia during and following the Ebola outbreak in 2014.

For his work during and after the Ebola outbreak and for the unique perspective he brings now to the promotion of international cooperation within the global PA community, Alvin P. Davis is a living legacy.

For more information and images from Alvin Davis' story, please see the [August 2015 Issue of PA Professional](#) and the [PAHx Collections & Exhibits website page](#).

Richard A. Smith, MD, developer of the MEDEX concept, celebrates his 83rd birthday at the Honolulu Arts Museum. Ruth Ballweg, PAHX Historian, joined him and friends for this historic occasion.



Photograph courtesy of Ruth Ballweg, MPA, PA-C



Stop by **PAHx Booth #204 in the Exhibit Hall** during the PAEA Conference. We will be demonstrating the **Educational & Historian Toolkits** and we'll have all kinds of great **PA History Society giveaways!**



Check out the Educational Toolkit & Historian Toolkit at the PAHx Booth

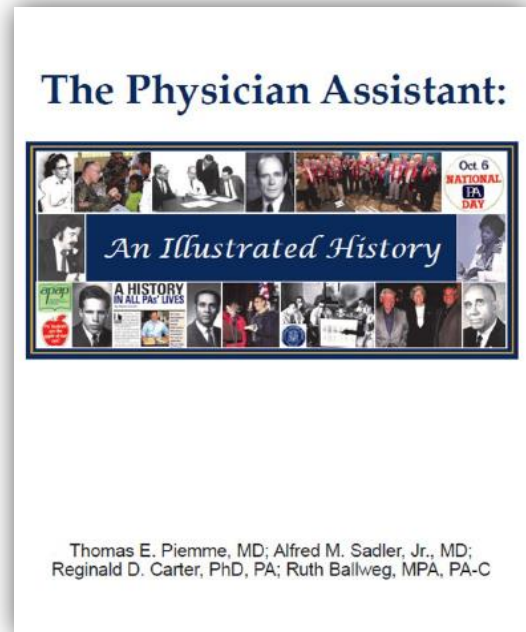
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Thomas E. Piemme, MD; Alfred M. Sadler, Jr., MD;
Reginald D. Carter, PhD, PA; Ruth Ballweg, MPA, PA-C

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Payment type: Check Credit Card

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