



Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the Physician Assistant History Society

The First Annual Conference Forty Years Ago

Tom Piemme, Fred Sadler and Reg Carter

We descended into Wichita Falls on Trans Texas Airways (known to the locals as “Tree Top,” later to become Continental Airlines). Air Force buses waited to take us to the “headquarters hotel,” – in reality, a Sheraton motel. It was the *First Annual Conference on New Health Practitioners*, April 1973, to be held in conjunction with the first truly national meeting of the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

At the last of the “Duke Conferences,” a year earlier, it had been announced that Duke University would no longer sponsor its successful series of meetings. It was time for national organizations to step up to the plate. Fred Sadler, President of the newly formed Association of Physician Assistant Programs, and Tom Godkins, President of the Academy, welcomed the opportunity. But it wasn’t to be easy. Neither organization had staff support; more importantly, neither had funds.

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History Society Book to Debut at Conference

The Physician Assistant History Society is pleased to introduce a new book at *IMPACT 2013*, the annual AAPA Conference, to be held in Washington, DC, over Memorial Day weekend. Entitled, *The Physician Assistant: An Illustrated History*, authored by Thomas Piemme, Alfred Sadler, Reginald Carter, and Ruth Ballweg, and published by Acacia Publishing, Inc., the book presents a half century of history of the profession in a convenient format. The book is structured around

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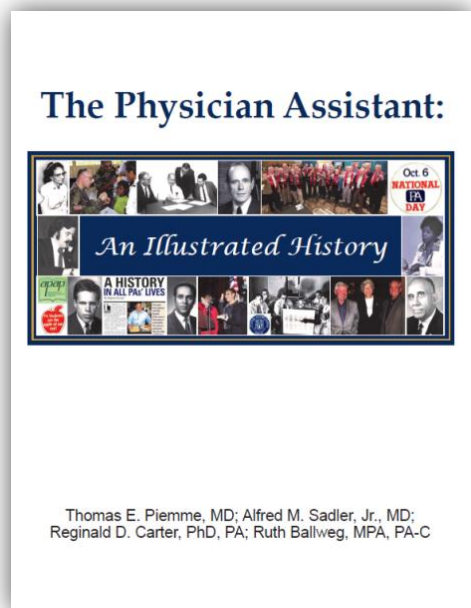
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the “Timeline” that is the major feature of the PAHx website, accompanied by abstracted biographies of key leaders through the decades, and illustrations from the archives. An opening chapter puts the early history in the context of its time, while a closing discussion anticipates the future of the profession.
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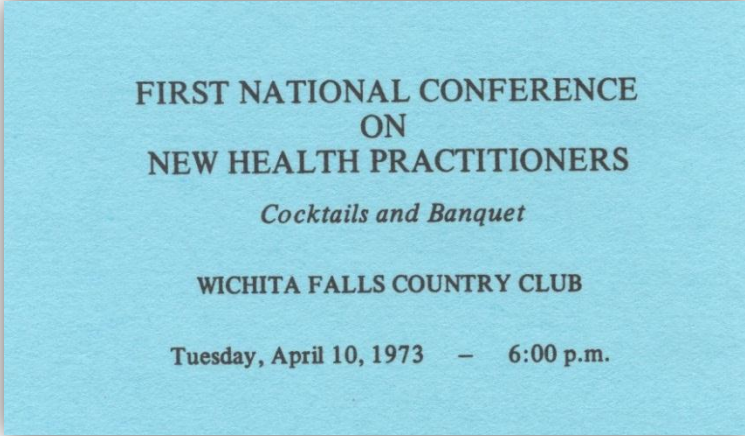


Book cover for *The Physician Assistant: An Illustrated History*

The First Annual Conference Forty Years Ago

*Tom Piemme, Fred Sadler and Reg Carter
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The United States Air Force to the rescue! Chuck Mullican, the physician director of the emerging PA program at Sheppard Air Force Base, approached Col. Nick Nicholas, Commander of the School of Healthcare Sciences to determine whether the Air Force might be willing to host such an event. With high level approval in hand, Col. Nicholas became the Conference Coordinator. A date was identified; hotel accommodations and meeting space secured; and mailing lists acquired. Transportation to and from the base was arranged, and banquet space reserved (the Officer's Club, no less).



FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
NEW HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

Cocktails and Banquet

WICHITA FALLS COUNTRY CLUB

Tuesday, April 10, 1973 - 6:00 p.m.

Ticket for the banquet held at the Officer's Club during the first Annual Conference.

AAPA and APAP officers began contacting national medical organizations. The AMA, the National Board of Medical Examiners, the Federation of State Medical Boards, and the Association of American Medical Colleges readily agreed to participate. Representatives of organized nursing volunteered to contribute to the program, as well. (Despite efforts to attract nurse practitioners to the Conference, few nurses attended.) By November of 1972, a conference program had been established.

More than 250 PAs, educators, and national medical leaders assembled in the town of Wichita Falls,

Texas on April 10, 1973 for three days of an intense program. 1972 had been, perhaps, the most significant year in the history of the profession. The Bureau of Health Manpower had provided funding to 24 new programs, instantly tripling the number of existing programs. The Joint Review Committee of the AMA had begun the process of accreditation. And states were quickly writing legislation and regulations to permit PAs to practice medicine under the supervision of physicians.

All of these issues, and more, were featured in paper sessions and panels, often in parallel. But the topic that riveted the PAs in attendance was the impending certifying examination by the NBME – now only eight months away. Several presentations by the Board were offered on the first morning, followed by open discussion that afternoon. The sessions ended with expressions of grateful appreciation for the support of the Board for this young profession.

During the meeting, both AAPA and APAP found opportunity to convene meetings of their respective memberships. Most of the third day of the conference was devoted to opportunity for “continuing medical education” for the PAs in attendance. An unexpected, but exceedingly positive, byproduct of the meeting location was that “downtown” Wichita Falls provided little in the way of distractions. Interest groups had the opportunity to form, and create some of the “constituent organizations” that were to become such a strong future element of the Academy.

A lesson in meeting planning economy, and everlasting gratitude to the United States Air Force: Since space and transportation were provided, conference expenses were held to less than \$10,000. Astonishingly, modest registration fees yielded a surplus of \$3000 to be used as seed money for the 1974 conference in New Orleans. Having managed an extraordinary meeting, the Academy and the Association demonstrated a collaborative and “can do” capability that would set the stage for future success.

History Society Book to Debut at Conference

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While the book is intended for practicing PAs, it should serve PA programs as a useful companion volume to courses of instruction in the history of the profession. The authors anticipate that it will be of interest, as well, to young people considering the health professions as a career, and helpful to guidance and career counselors in junior colleges and high schools.

The book will be available at the History Society booth near the registration area, throughout the Convention, in return for a contribution of \$10.00 to the Society. Following the meeting, it may be obtained from the Society (ContactUs@pahx.org) for \$12.00 per copy (\$10.00 for orders of 15, or more). It can also be obtained over the internet from Amazon, and from Barnes and Noble.

PA Programs that contribute the “Educational Research Fee” to renew, or become a new “Associate” to the History Society for the 2013-14 academic year will receive one complimentary copy of *The Physician Assistant: An Illustrated History*.

A Message from the President

Thomas E. Piemme, MD

For a number of years, several of us who have been involved for a very long time have wanted to see an accessible, highly readable, low-cost book, devoted exclusively to the history of the physician assistant profession. Even if we had to do it ourselves. And so we did!

Sitting around the History Society office last fall, Fred Sadler, Reg Carter, Ruth Ballweg, and I began to discuss using the extraordinary resource of the Society website to create a linear story of the people, places, and events of the last half century. Could we use the rich “Timeline,” substantially enhanced over

the past three years, and punctuate it with abstracted biographies, photos, and illustrations that sit elsewhere on the website? And so we began an iterative process, passing drafts from one to another until a book began to take shape.

Fred Sadler, together with his brother, Blair Sadler, who had written the first book on the PA movement 40 years ago with Ann Bliss, initiated opening and closing chapters that would provide perspective on the past, and on the future. Was there anything missing? We began to realize that there were a number of people, among both PAs and other professionals, who had made extraordinary contributions to the profession, and to society at large, who didn’t necessarily appear in the Timeline. And so we added sections to recognize those achievements.

Is this the complete history? Not really. It is a book of highlights to provide practicing PAs and students with an appreciation of where they came from, and where they might be going. It will provide high school and junior college students with some insight into a career that has been acclaimed to be among the most valuable in the nation’s economy today. It will provide policy-makers with some perspective on the exceedingly wide range of activities within the practice of medicine that PAs are engaged in, and their very real potential to mitigate the looming shortage of physicians, as the major provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act take effect within the next year.

The longer narrative of the history of the profession awaits another day. With foundation support, the Trustees of the Society now have unprecedented access to source documents from all of the organizations that were a part of the establishment and growth of the PA concept. It will be with the support of PAs, PA programs, and our partner organizations that the comprehensive tale will ultimately be told.

Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy *The Physician Assistant: An Illustrated History*.

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Physician Assistants in Cardiovascular Surgery

Raisa Polacek and Tom Piemme

It has been said that the development of the physician assistant concept in the 1960s was the human equivalent of a new technology. Perhaps nowhere was that phrase more aptly applied than to the parallel development of cardiovascular surgery in the same era.

Cardiac surgeons have long known that what they do involves multiple technical skills that could be as well performed by others with far less training. In 1930, famed cardiac surgeon, Alfred Blalock, while still at Vanderbilt University, employed Vivian Theodore Thomas, a young African American, as a surgical "research assistant." Thomas helped Blalock to develop the surgical procedure for "blue baby syndrome" (Tetralogy of Fallot). When they moved to Johns Hopkins University, it was Thomas who taught the surgical technique to residents even though he, himself, never performed the procedure on a patient.

In the mid-1960s two significant developments propelled cardiovascular surgery to a new level. At the Mayo Clinic, Dr. John Kirklin was instrumental in developing a functional heart/lung bypass machine. At the Cleveland Clinic, Dr. Rene Favaloro began using the saphenous vein as a conduit to bypass blocked coronary arteries. Training programs around the country exploded with new resident positions – not necessarily because the world needed more cardiothoracic surgeons, but because the surgeons needed hands to assist in the technical procedures, and the management of patients.

When Kirklin moved to the University of Alabama in 1966, he saw the wisdom of Eugene Stead's development of the physician assistant at Duke University, and in 1967 began a surgeon assistant program of his own. The concept of the assistant in surgery was slower to develop than the assistant in primary care – largely because both accreditation

and certification of PAs had been exclusively focused on the primary care PA. Programs developed at Cornell University, and at Montefiore Hospital in New York. Then in 1973, the American College of Surgery developed its own set of “Essentials” for training in surgery, and joined the AMA effort in accreditation.

As surgical training programs matured, the tasks being assigned to assistants in cardiovascular surgery were expanding beyond any initial expectation. Surgeon assistants were taught to suture, then to first assist at surgery, and ultimately to harvest veins, open and close the chest, operate heart/lung machines, and provide pre and post-operative care. Some academic programs began to reduce the number of surgical residencies (e.g., Emory University).

The Association of Physician Assistants in Cardiovascular Surgery was established in 1981. With the strong support of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, continuous learning became, and remains the goal, as new techniques in the field evolve. Many, if not most, major medical center surgical services in general, and cardiovascular surgical services in particular, will avow that they could not function without the skills of the surgical physician assistant.

Manpower as a new technology! It happened.

Care from the Heart **Memoirs of Thelma Ingles, RN**

After many years, the memoirs of Thelma M. Ingles, RN, the pioneering nursing educator who worked with Eugene A. Stead, Jr., MD, in the late 1950s, have been published by her niece, Susan Haradon, PhD.

Ms. Ingles, who died in 1983, was a towering figure in nursing education for nearly 50 years. A graduate of the rigorous program at the Massachusetts

President Elect Sadler Visits Richard Smith in Hawaii

On April 13, 2013 Alfred M. Sadler, Jr. and his wife, Edi, visited with Richard Smith, founder of the MEDEX concept, and his wife, Lorna, at their home in Hawaii. It was the first time the two had gotten together in 43 years. Over a leisurely brunch they talked at length about Smith’s time with the Peace Corps in Nigeria, and about the years spent on behalf of the United States Public Health Service, working to desegregate U.S. hospitals in advance of the implementation of Medicare and Medicaid. Smith talked of his “collaborative model” approach to those projects, as well as the development of MEDEX at the University of Washington. The MEDEX model, the principle alternative to the Duke University Program in the U.S., emphasized the delivery of health services to underserved communities, and was rapidly emulated by seven other programs. Smith, now 81, is comfortably in retirement in Honolulu, his base since 1972.



Fred Sadler and his wife Edi, flanking Lorna and Dick Smith.

General Hospital, she arrived at Duke University in 1949, chairing the Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing. In 1957 she invested a sabbatical year with Dr. Stead to develop a Master's level program, training nurses to directly assist physicians in their practice of medicine in both office and hospital settings. Stead and Ingles then applied for accreditation from the National League for Nursing.

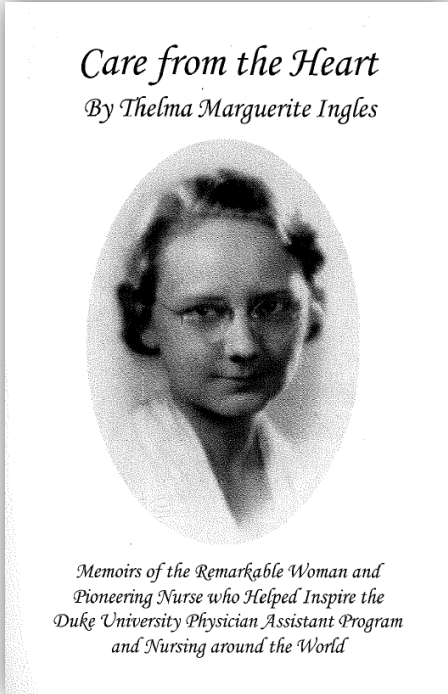
The request was denied (twice) on two grounds. First, there was too much influence of physicians in the training program. Second, Ms. Ingles lacked a degree in nursing. (She held a baccalaureate in English from UCLA, and a Master's degree from Case Western Reserve University.)

Although successful, without formal accreditation the program ceased to exist. It served, however, as the acknowledged progenitor of the Physician Assistant program that Stead was to pioneer in 1965.

Following the experiment at Duke, Thelma Ingles worked with the Rockefeller Foundation where she became the foremost figure in international nursing education of the last half century. Visiting more than 50 countries, she improved nursing education throughout South America, establishing both BS and MS programs in Cali, Columbia. She served as a consultant to the World Health Organization, the Peace Corps, and nursing schools in Thailand, Finland, Russia, and England. Later she helped establish some of the first hospices in the United States.

Care from the Heart (BTW Publishing) is the fascinating story of this remarkable woman, told in her own words. It is the voice of a maverick leader, who defied convention to bring improved health care to millions throughout the world.

The book will be available at the History Society booth in Washington, D.C., during the AAPA Annual meeting.



Visit our booth in the registration area at the AAPA conference for your chance to **win an iPad mini!**
No purchase necessary.

Fri. May 24
 12pm - 5pm

Sat. May 25 - Tues. May 28
 8am - 5pm

Visit our Web site to see what's "new" in PA history!
www.pahx.org

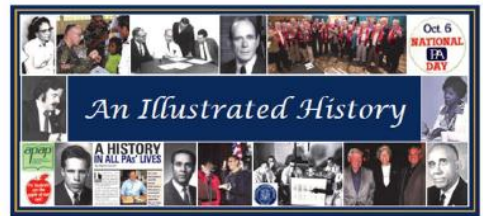
The Physician Assistant: *An Illustrated History*

A concise history of the people, places, and events that have propelled the concept of the PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT from its inception at Duke University in 1965 to its position as a major force in American medicine today.

Suggested Donation: \$10 each

- **Regularly \$12 each**
- **\$10 each plus shipping & packaging for orders of 15 or more books**
- **Cash, check & credit cards accepted**

The Physician Assistant:



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

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