



# Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the Physician Assistant History Society



## Message from the President

**Karen Mulitalo, MPAS, PA-C**

In November 2015, I had the great pleasure of becoming the President Elect of the PA History Society, and in January I began my two-year term as President. Many individuals have worked diligently to establish and develop the Society into the organization it is today, and it has been a great a privilege to work with the leadership and trustees over the past three years. Many of them were present when the profession was in its infancy. I'm grateful for their desire to share their memories and experiences for the benefit of the profession.

I entered the PA profession in the 1990s, so I've learned a great deal from my fellow trustees. Their pioneering spirit, willingness to take risks, and dedication to a profession that would make a positive impact on the health care of this nation have inspired me.

I would like others who enjoy a PA career today to be inspired by our PA history and to realize that *your* stories may be added to our history. The profession continues to grow. There are many opportunities for leadership and innovation. Nothing illustrates this more vividly than learning about the contributions and hard work of others who made it possible for us to enjoy being a part of the PA profession today. Whether you are a PA student, a recent graduate, mid-career or retired from many years of successful service, the PA History Society has many things to offer and will benefit from your continued contributions of time and talent.

*(President's Message continued on page 2)*

## Inside this edition:

- Message from the President .....page 1
- An Appreciation of Thomas E. Piemme, MD.....page 1
- PAHx Board Welcomes New Trustees.....page 3
- From our Archives: First AAPA Exhibit....page 4
- The First International PA Conference in India .....page 5
- Honoring those Who Served: LCDR William H. Feyh, PA-C, MSC, USN .....page 6
- Historian Toolkit ..... page 6
- Illustrated History Book Order Form.....page 8

## An Appreciation of Thomas E. Piemme, MD

**Alfred M. Sadler, MD**

The PAHx Board of Trustees appreciates the leadership of Tom Piemme, who concluded six years of service on the Board at the end of 2015. His contribution to the Society and to the PA profession at large has been enormous.

Tom and I first met in 1970 when he was in charge of all outpatient services in the Department of Medicine at George Washington University School of Medicine and I was at the Yale University School of Medicine. After establishing a PA program at

*(An Appreciation of Thomas E. Piemme continued on page 2, at the bottom of column 1)*

*(President’s Message continued from page 1)*

If you haven’t visited our website lately, you are missing out on a great number of PA History Society projects and services! PA programs and constituent organizations that are associate members can take advantage of the Educational Toolkit, which helps educators and presenters teach the history of the PA profession, and the Historian Toolkit, which outlines ways to preserve the history of your institution or organization.

The Society continues to work with the National Library of Medicine to develop exhibit material and curricula that will expose middle school, high school and college students to the PA profession’s role in American medicine. The exhibit will tour libraries and colleges starting in 2017 when the PA profession celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> year since PA students first graduated from Duke University.

I look forward to sharing the history of the PA profession with all generations of PAs through the work of the PA History Society. With the generous support of associate members, individual PAs, and the staff, the Society will continue to develop rich content and activities for years to come.

*(An Appreciation of Thomas E. Piemme continued from page 1)*

GWU, he emerged as one of the principal leaders who helped take the profession from the successful pilot program stage of the late 1960s to becoming fully incorporated into American medical care.



In the early 1970s, he served as the second president of APAP (now PAEA); led the planning of the first National Conference on New Health Practitioners (now AAPA’s annual meeting); helped raise grant funds to establish a joint national office for

APAP and AAPA in Washington, DC; encouraged the National Board of Medical Examiners to develop and administer the first National Examination for Certification of PAs; and served as the founding president of the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

He also organized and chaired an AAMC conference on primary care, which included a half-day session on PAs and featured the leaders in the field – giving many medical school deans an opportunity to learn about the emerging profession in their midst. It has been my good fortune to work with him on most all of these endeavors.

Since joining the History Society, Tom was instrumental in moving the Society to become a supporting organization of the NCCPA, thus helping to assure stable financial support and sustainability.



He subsequently served as the Society’s Board President (2012-2013). He is coauthor of *The Physician Assistant: An Illustrated History* (2013) and resurrected the Society’s *Historical Happenings* newsletter in 2012. He has been active in all aspects of Society work including the National Library of Medicine five-year banner project on PAs (2017-2021), the development of Educational Toolkit modules for PA Programs, participating in videos such as *The Way We Were*, raising grant funds for specific projects and recruiting new members to the Board of Trustees. Our profession and our History Society have been vastly enhanced by his efforts.

Tom will now be devoting more of his free time to regional theater, where he participates as an organizer, producer, actor and critic. His knowledge of Broadway musicals is encyclopedic. What a guy!

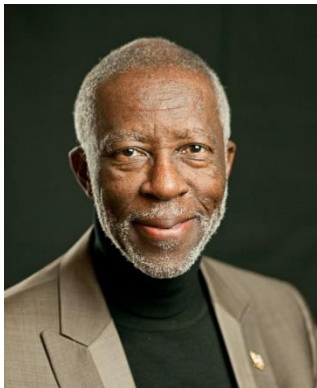
His service on the PAHx Board will be missed.

## PAHx Board Welcomes New Trustees

*Marilyn H. Fitzgerald, Honorary PA*

Three new trustees have been appointed by the NCCPA Board of Directors to serve three-year terms starting this January.

**John J. Davis, PA-C**, is currently an Adjunct Professor at the Christian Brothers University PA Program in Memphis, TN. A 1973 graduate of the Duke University PA program, John has practiced in Tennessee, Florida, and Arkansas for 35 years in a wide variety of settings including clinics, nursing homes, county detention centers, Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, and PA student and family practice resident education. He has done extensive research



in hypertension, serving as AAPA's liaison to the National High Blood Pressure Education Program for many years. He also has served in the US Air Force, the US Army Reserves, and the Tennessee Army National Guard.

John has been a leader in the AAPA House of Delegates, on the AAPA Board of Directors, the Tennessee Academy of PAs, Arkansas Academy of PAs, and most recently on the Board of Directors of National Commission on Certification of PAs. He is a Charter member of the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants.

His other interests include skiing, traveling with his wife and visiting his children and grandchildren.

**Henry (Hank) Heard, MPAS, MA, PA-C**, assistant clinical professor at the Mercer University Physician Assistant Program, is a native Georgian and 1976 graduate of the Medical College of Georgia PA program. In 1985, the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners for Georgia selected Hank as the single PA ex-officio member of the medical board. He was president of the Georgia

Association of PAs from 1987 to 1990. In 1985, Hank retired as a Colonel from the Air Force with 23 years of service, the first PA Colonel in the Air National Guard. His last deployment overseas was to Baghdad, Iraq, where he commanded an Air Force EMEDS hospital.



A history buff, Hank has written several historical papers on medical services during World War II. As an educator at Mercer University, he planned the first-ever PA history symposium at the University, had the presentations recorded, and donated the proceedings to the PA History Society.

**Steve Wilson, PA-C**, has provided patient care in surgical specialties for the past 41 years since his graduation from the first BS degree program at Alderson-Broadus College. He is one of 200 PAs who took the original NCCPA certification exam in 1973.



In the mid-80s Steve was a leader in the AAPA House of Delegates, serving as a delegate from the Pennsylvania Society of PAs and HOD Secretary and HOD Vice Speaker. He has served on the AAPA Board of Directors (1992-1994, 1995-1997) and various AAPA standing committees, councils and commissions (1981 – 2013). Constituent organizations have also benefitted from Steve's leadership – the Maryland Academy of PAs, the Pennsylvania Society of PAs, and the Association of PAs in Cardiovascular Surgery. He has been a member of the *Journal of AAPA* Editorial Board since 2006 and served as the Surgical Department Editor.

*(PAHx Welcomes new Trustees continued on page 4)*

*(PAHx Welcomes new Trustees continued from page 3)*

These new trustees have filled seats vacated by Tom Piemme, MD; Gino Gianola, PA; and Mary Warner, PA-C, whose terms of service on the Board concluded at the end of 2015.

## **From our Archives: First AAPA Exhibit**

**Reginald D. Carter, PhD, PA**

When the physician assistant profession was still more of a “concept” than a reality, the American Association of Physician’s Assistants (the original organizational title for the AAPA) decided that one of the best ways to inform physicians about their education and roles as PAs was to attend and exhibit at medical society meetings.

Their first opportunity came to exhibit at the 47th annual convention of the Medical Society of the State of North Carolina. The meeting was held in Pinehurst, NC from May 16-20, 1970. Steve Joyner, a member of the AAPA board of directors, submitted an application to exhibit at the upcoming meeting and in February received notice that their application had been approved. This was wonderful news, but the fledgling organization established in 1968 had few members and little money. So Joyner sent correspondence to Dr. Robert (Bob) Howard, director of the Duke PA Program, requesting his assistance with funding. “As you know, our funds are very short at present ... and we don’t know if we will be able to swing funds for accommodations and meals.” Howard agreed to provide \$16 a day for room plus \$10.50 for meals, the limits set by Duke University at that time.

Fortunately, we have a photograph of the first exhibit built and displayed by the AAPA at a medical society meeting. Pictured are Steve Joyner and Carl Fasser, another board member, staffing the exhibit on May 18, 1970. A clipping from Joyner’s home town newspaper states that “they were available for verbal inquiries about physician’s

assistants and handed out pamphlets and brochures containing information about various physician’s assistant programs.” The display is simple, large and to the point. Its heading proclaims “Physician’s

Assistants: A New Concept” and the panels containing photographs of PAs in action on either side of the enlarged AAPA logo simply states “service” and “duty.” The newspaper clipping concludes by saying that the PA profession is “not only acceptable but very desirable in the long search to obtain more personal medical attention without taking up the time of the M.D.”



Note: Letter from Steven L. Joyner to Dr. Robert Howard requesting funds to attend NC Medical Society Meeting, is available at: [https://medspace.mc.duke.edu/sites/default/files/duemca\\_4822\\_PA-0064-01.jpg](https://medspace.mc.duke.edu/sites/default/files/duemca_4822_PA-0064-01.jpg) The photo and newspaper quotes are from the Steven L. Joyner Personal Papers Collection, PA History Society, Johns Creek, GA.

### **PA Program Directors:**

**Share your feedback with the Society about PAHx services and educational products.**

**Watch for an email that will be sent to you by the end of January.**

**The Society welcomes your comments and appreciates your participation!**

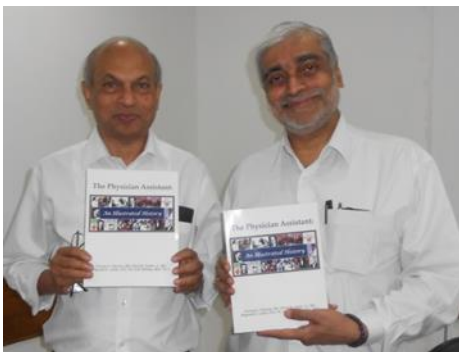
## The First International PA Conference in India

*Ruth Ballweg, MPA, PA-C*

On October 10 and 11, 2015, in Kochi, India, the Indian Academy of Physician Assistants hosted its first international conference to celebrate 20 years of the PA profession in India. The conference was designed to support the professional development of PAs in India as well as to build global networks with PA organizations, PA educational programs and individual PAs globally. They seek connection, recognition, and advice.

Hosted by Amrita Hospital in Kochi, the conference was attended by about 600 PAs and current students. The conference began with a welcoming ceremony honoring AMMA, the spiritual leader and founder of Amrita Hospital and Medical Institute. Dignitaries, IAPA leaders and international guests participated by lighting a ceremonial lamp and sprinkling colorful blossoms on the stage.

The entire first day of the conference was dedicated to talks about the history and the future of PAs in India. U.S. speakers included Ruth Ballweg, Nadia Cobb, Rod Hooker, and Marie Meckle. Ankur Verma, a student from the James Cook University in Townsville, Queensland, represented Australia. The past president of the IAPA, Gomathi Sundari, represented the Indian PAs in describing their history and development.



(L) Dr. Prathapan Nair, the Principle (aka “Dean”) of the Amrita School of Medicine and (R) Dr. Prem Nair, the Medical Director of the Amrita School of Medicine

Lack of visibility and lack of recognition is a major concern for PAs in India. Because they are not regulated, their title is not protected, and many other health workers call themselves PAs although they may have little formal training and function more as medical assistants. While Indian PA training is similar to that of U.S. PAs, it is almost entirely specialized; with PAs initially practicing in cardiology and cardiovascular surgery followed by urology, nephrology, and head/neck/cosmetic surgery. An estimated 1,000 PAs have been trained in India. However, many have moved on to more lucrative careers in the medical device and pharmaceutical industries. Many of these PAs cite the lack of recognition and low salaries as their reasons for leaving the PA career. Others cite the problem with the word “assistant” in their title and are pushing for renaming the career to “Physician Associate.”

Realizing the dramatic issues with health workforce shortages throughout India, the Indian government has launched an effort to recognize and regulate all allied health professions, a move that would include PAs. Mrs. Kavita Narayan, a government official representing the National Initiative for the Allied Health Sciences, spoke about this project and how it will be used to expand health care access across India.

There were questions about why the PAs would not be aligning themselves with the medical community as has been done in other countries. The answer, apparently, is that while PAs have strong supporters among the subspecialty doctors and surgeons with whom they work, they are not well understood or supported by the medical profession as a whole.

The subject of primary care was discussed with recognition that a primary care structure is essentially absent in India. With only 3% of the GDP spent on health care, most patients pay “out of pocket” for their care and typically self-refer themselves to specialty doctors and surgeons for

*(The First International PA Conference in India continued on page 6)*

*(The First International PA Conference in India continued from page 5)*

specialty services. People with chronic illnesses rely on Ayurvedic healers rather than doctors in the allopathic system. Thus, though PAs—with slightly different training—might be able to provide badly needed primary care, there is no system or structure to support that care. In this discussion, not all of the Indian PAs supported an expansion to include primary care feeling that this might threaten their role and their status.

At the request of the conference planners, the US PAs talked about types of regulation (including accreditation, registration, licensure, and certification), the need for research and writing, the potential for additional interaction with the global PA movement, and current international issues.

A highlight of the conference was the debut of the first edition of the new Indian PA Journal PAGE—which stands for Physician Assistants Generating Excellence. Edited by Gomathi Sundar, the journal included greetings from PA Academy Presidents in the US, Canada, the UK and Australia and articles contributed by each of the international speakers.

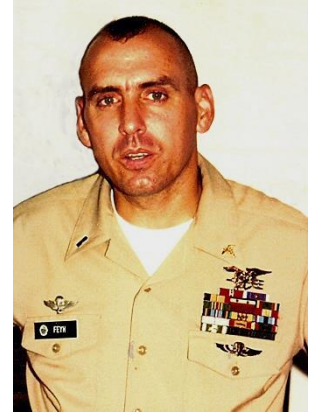
The next steps will be planning for a future conference in India as well as activities to secure funding to allow Indian PA leaders to attend AAPA conferences.

**Honoring those Who Served:  
LCDR William H. Feyh, PA-C,  
MSC, USN**

***Exhibit by Reginald D. Carter, Ph.D., PA and  
Kenneth R. Harbert, PhD, MHA, PA- C***

The Veterans Wall Exhibit and the Veterans Memorial Garden located at the Eugene A. Stead, Jr. Center for PAs in Durham, NC is the PA History Society’s way of honoring the pioneers of the PA

profession who served as military corpsmen prior to becoming physician assistants. In 2011, the Navy Physician Assistant Association (NAPA) requested that a memorial service be held at the Stead Center in May to honor LCDR William H. Feyh who had died in 2005. Bill was president of the NAPA during 1993-1994. Those in attendance included Bill’s family, military colleagues, professional friends and faculty from the Duke University PA program from which he graduated in 1975. A plaque of remembrance was presented to the family and to the PA History Society to be displayed at the Stead Center.



**Historian Toolkit  
Available on the PAHx website**

Your institution’s memory is preserved in its records. The papers and records produced over time describe the unique history and legacy of your organization. They are a valuable resource that can be used to orient future members and to inform others about the origins, purpose, growth and development of your organization. By archiving your records, you will assure that your unique history and heritage will remain a part of your organization’s collective memory. The PA History Society has produced a Historian’s Toolkit to encourage and to show our Associates how to identify, gather, organize and maintain materials that document the history of their programs or organizations.

*(Historian Toolkit continued on page 7)*



## History Society Trustees and Staff

### President

Karen Mulitalo, MPAS, PA-C

### Immediate Past President

Alfred M. Sadler, Jr., MD

### Secretary/Treasurer

Maryann F. Ramos, MPH, PA

### Elected Trustees

John J. Davis, PA-C

Marilyn Fitzgerald, Honorary PA

Deborah Atherton Gerbert, MS, PA-C

Henry H. Heard, MPAS, MA, PA-C

Raisa Polacek, MPAS, PA-C

Stephen D. Wilson, PA-C

Robert Wooten, PA-C

### Ex-Officio Trustee

Dawn Morton-Rias, EdD, PA-C

Executive Director & NCCPA CEO

### Historians

Ruth Ballweg, MPA, PA-C

Historian

Reginald D. Carter, PhD, PA

Historian Emeritus

### Staff

Lori Konopka-Sauer

Managing Director

Cory Faulkner, MLIS

Archivist

*(Historian Toolkit continued from page 6)*

The toolkit explains the importance of using archival standards to process and maintain records and how to make these records available to their constituents and to the general public. The contents of the toolkit describe the basics of archiving and what types of materials to collect and maintain. It provides links to online resources useful in conducting oral histories and digitizing documents and images and provides templates used by the PA History Society to grow its archival collection of personal papers, photographs and videos, oral histories and biographies. Working collaboratively, the PA History Society and our Associates will assure that the local, regional, national and international history of our profession is being preserved and made readily accessible for educational, research and literary purposes.



Visit our website ([www.pahx.org](http://www.pahx.org)) to see what's "new" in PA History!



Like us on Facebook!

[www.facebook.com/PAHistory](http://www.facebook.com/PAHistory)

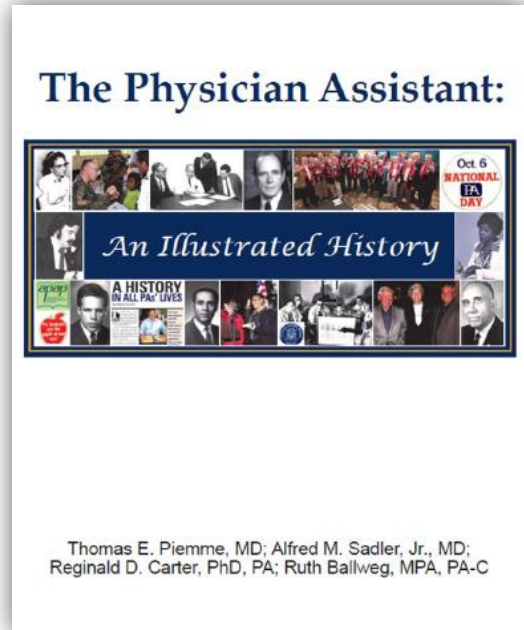
## The Physician Assistant: *An Illustrated History*

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.

### Special Pricing for PA Programs, PAs and Constituent Organizations:

**\$12 each** (retail price \$15.95)

- **\$10 each plus shipping & packaging for orders of 15 or more books**
- **Checks & credit cards accepted**



Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$12 (\$10 bulk) + **shipping and packaging\***

*\*If you are paying with a check, please do not submit your payment until you receive the final invoice to include shipping and packaging charges) from the PAHx office.*

Extra Donation to Society: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment type:      Check      Credit Card

### Shipping Information

**Credit Card Payments can be made via  
PayPal on the PAHx website at:  
<http://www.pahx.org/pa-history-book>**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*To submit your order, or for additional  
questions, please contact us at:*

Email: ContactUs@pahx.org  
Phone: 678.417.8682 Fax: 678.417.8175  
Physician Assistant History Society  
12000 Findley Road, Suite 160  
Johns Creek, GA 30097