



# Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the Physician Assistant History Society

## Message from the President

*Alfred M. Sadler, Jr, MD*

I am honored to have begun serving as President of the Physician Assistant History Society last November 11. We all owe a big thank you to our outgoing President, Tom Piemme, who has so ably led and guided us through the past two years. Tom and I go back to 1970 when we each became active in starting PA Programs and it has been a great pleasure to work together again on behalf of physician assistants in general and the Society in particular. Tom referred to the many recent accomplishments of the Society in the Winter 2013 Newsletter (All Newsletters are available on our website at [www.pahx.org](http://www.pahx.org)).

This Newsletter is filled with important matters which I trust you will take a few moments to read. On a sad note, we will all miss an outstanding physician educator and leader, Rhodes Haverty, MD - the second Chair of the NCCPA - who died recently (please see Tom's remembrance). There are other important contributions from Trustee, Ann Bliss; Historian, Ruth Ballweg and Historian Emeritus, Reg Carter, that are enlightening and entertaining.

The Society has completed two projects recently. The first is a collaboration with Dan Wagener at the AAPA where we provided our sister organization with images and videos for a new interactive timeline. This will soon appear on the Academy's website and is designed to complement the comprehensive Timeline that can be found on the Society's website.

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## A Word from the Historian

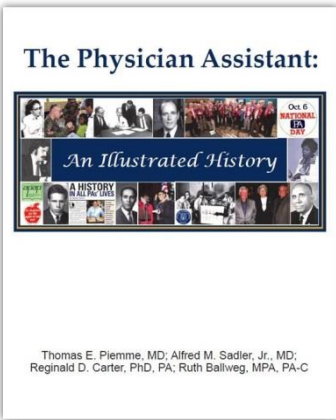
*Ruth Ballweg, MPA, PA-C*

A number of program directors and clinical coordinators have asked about bulk purchases of the book, *The Physician Assistant: An Illustrated History*, for use by programs. I wanted to share with educators our experience with the book here at MEDEX Northwest.

We have presented the book as a "gift" to students during our PA history lectures, and have given it to 2<sup>nd</sup> year students as a graduation present. It has been well received when handed out at the same time the students receive their graduation certificates. I've heard from family members how much they have enjoyed looking through the book, finally "understanding" the career that their son or daughter has chosen.

We've also used the book as an advocacy tool within the institution for formal presentations to deans and department chairs, and plan soon to

present it to the President of the University, the Provost, and members of the Board of Regents.



Externally, we've presented it to legislators, CEOs and medical directors of the major health systems in the Seattle region, and influential community leaders. We are now planning to distribute the book to the leadership of the Washington State

Medical Association. This group played a major role as a co-founder of the MEDEX Program, and was the sponsor of the initial practice act approved by the Washington State Legislature.

Other program directors who have purchased the book in bulk report that they have effectively used it to inform, recruit and retain preceptors who often know little or nothing about the rich history of the profession and the effectiveness with which PAs have enhanced the practice of medicine.

I hope others of you will consider similar purchases to promote your own program and the PA profession. At the end of this newsletter is an order form to facilitate the process. Be assured that all proceeds from the sale of the book go directly to support the Physician Assistant History Society.

## Message from the President

**Alfred M. Sadler, Jr, MD**

*(Continued from pg. 1)*

The second is our work with the Oregon Health & Science University's exhibit in the Biomedical Information Communication Center (April - June 2014) which will include several displays on the history of the physician assistant profession and the OHSU PA Program. We have sent materials from our archives that help tell the PA story. As we observe the effectiveness of the exhibit, we expect to

learn more about what elements make an historical program presentation interesting and successful. We intend to pass this information to others who wish to present similar celebrations and events.

We are currently developing an Educational Tool Kit for our Associate members, which will serve as an aid for teaching PA History, and an Historical Tool Kit to help individual programs write and record their own history. Details will be forthcoming as we roll out these products.

During the next few years we also look forward to collaborating with our sister PA organizations in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the profession (the first PA class at Duke University Medical Center graduated in 1967). We welcome suggestions from the PA universe about what you would like to see emphasized and any contributions you wish to make.

The Society will continue to address the early history of the profession while placing emphasis on recent history as well. Today's important happenings will be tomorrow's history and we encourage everyone in the PA world to be a part of that history. [We are eager to hear from you with suggestions.](#) Please check out our continually updated website for recently added exhibits, biographies, audio interviews and video clips.

I look forward to working with my fellow Trustees and our outstanding staff at the NCCPA, and extend gratitude to the NCCPA for its ongoing support. While appreciating our outstanding outgoing Executive Director, Pam Dean, MBA, I am also pleased to welcome the Society's new Executive Director, Dawn Morton-Rias, Ed.D, PA.

## DUMC Archives PAHx Digital Repository

The Society's first digitization project was a joint venture with the Duke University Medical Center (DUMC) Library and Archives to image documents

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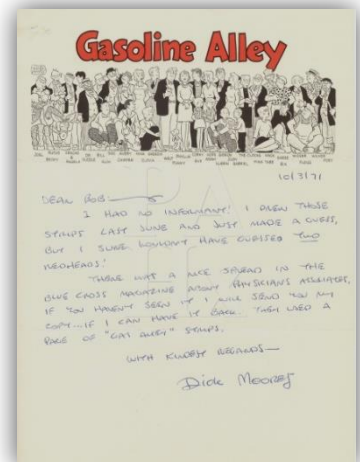
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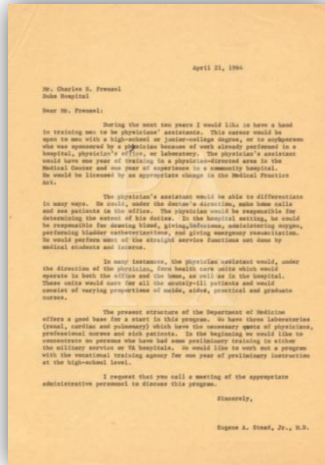
from within its extensive collections pertinent to the inception and development of the physician assistant concept, especially in its formative years from 1965 to 1975. This project was supported with federal LSTA funds made possible through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the State Library of North Carolina, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.

The project was completed in 2003. The DUMC archive is the repository for this digital collection which contains over 3,000 images selected from materials contained in the DUMC Archives. You can browse the MEDSpace© software by timeline periods and click on the document to view.

You can also search the digital repository using key words such as Stead, "Gasoline Alley," Certification, Accreditation, Legislation and so forth. For example, by browsing the time period [PA Ideological Era \(1961-1965\)](#) you can access Dr. Stead's 1964 letter to Duke Hospital Administrator Charles H. Frenzel announcing his plans to start a program to educate physician assistants. Or, by typing in the keyword "Gasoline Alley" in the search box, you can read



correspondence between cartoonist Dick Moores and Dr. Robert Howard about having Chipper Wallet, a former Coast Guard Corpsmen, enroll and complete his training as a physician assistant. [Click here](#) to access the DUMC Archives PAHx Digital Repository.



*Images courtesy of the Duke University Medical Center Archives.*

## New Website Exhibits Recall Pioneering Support from the Past

**Ann Bliss, RN, MSW**

Trustee Ann Bliss has submitted two new exhibits to the website that provide portraits of physicians who advanced the concept of the physician assistant in the 1960s and 1970s.

While Gene Stead was indeed the “father” of the physician assistant concept, he could not have succeeded without the strong support of [William Anlyan, MD](#), Dean of the Duke University School of Medicine. A brilliant scholar, winner of the prestigious Abraham Flexner Award, Anlyan was born in Alexandria, Egypt. He entered Yale University at the age



of 16, earned a BS in zoology in 15 months, and went on to Yale Medical School. Trained in Surgery at Duke, he joined the faculty and was appointed Dean at the age of 39. Stead and Anlyan held mutual admiration – Stead attending Anlyan’s surgery on his patients, and Anlyan participating in Stead’s case discussions. They became unusually close collaborators.

A solid supporter of the masters-level nurse practitioner program developed by Stead and Thelma Ingles in the 1950s, Anlyan was dismayed when the program was denied accreditation by the National League for Nursing. He enthusiastically backed Stead’s subsequent decision to train military corpsmen returning from Vietnam as physician assistants. A chance encounter with the Undersecretary of the Navy led to the awareness by the military that the physician assistant profession could lead to opportunity in civilian life for the 30,000 military corpsmen returning each year from Vietnam. Ultimately, Federal funding provided support, not only for the program at Duke, but for an additional 57 programs as the concept swept the country.

It was a decade after the successful launch of the Duke PA program that the National League for Nursing and the American Nurses Association finally realized that the concept of the nurse practitioner had merit. At first the nursing profession advocated limiting the nursing role to “care,” rather than “cure.” Many years later, Anlyan played a role in expanding the nursing horizon. As Chair of the Health Committee of the Duke Endowment Fund, he convened an invitational symposium on increased collaboration between physicians and nurses in the face of increasing demands for access to primary care and cost control.

The full exhibit, discussing the contributions of Dr. Anlyan, can be found on the [PAHx website](#).

The second new exhibit tells the story of [Priscilla Ruhe](#), BS, RPT, PA-C, MD, one of the dozens of early PAs who went on to become physicians. A

physical therapist from Wisconsin, who had worked with the Lakota-Sioux in South Dakota, Priscilla Herrick moved to New Haven in 1972 to become a PT supervisor at Yale New Haven Hospital.

Attracted by the emerging PA profession, she entered the third class at Yale. In 1977 she married David Ruhe, a Congregational Minister. They

settled in a rural community in Nebraska where she worked as a PA in an OB/GYN practice. Somewhat discouraged by the marginal acceptance of PAs at the time, she applied to, and was accepted by, the medical school at the University of Nebraska where she



excelled. Having completed residency in Family Practice, she and her husband then moved to Des Moines, Iowa, where he had been called to minister to another congregation. There, she rose to lead a primary care practice of physicians, PAs and nurse practitioners. The diversity and breadth of her experience led to her selection to become the first female President of the medical staff at her hospital. She served, as well, as a peer reviewer for Blue Cross/ Blue Shield and a member of the Medicaid Committee of the Iowa State Legislature. She retired in 2012. Ms. Ruhe always credited her training as a PA with her dedication to listening to the patient and attending to all aspects of care.

While the effort to become a PA was entirely hers, the decision to enter medical school was heavily influenced by her father-in-law, C.H. William Ruhe, MD, PhD. Bill Ruhe was the long-time Director of the Department of Medical Education at the American Medical Association and an ardent champion of the physician assistant profession. He presided over the development of the *Essentials for Educational Programs for the Assistant to the*

*Primary Care Physician*, and the formation of the Joint Review Committee on Accreditation (now ARC-PA). He was an advocate for the concept of continuing medical education during the years that it was becoming accepted as a requirement for maintenance of certification and licensure by physicians – and, derivatively for physician assistants, as well. A worthy mentor for Priscilla’s career!

The biography, tracing the career of Priscilla Ruhe, can be found on the [PAHx website](#).

## J. Rhodes Haverty, MD (1927-2014) Former President of the NCCPA

Rhodes Haverty, the first Secretary and the second President of the NCCPA passed away on January 24, 2014, after a period of declining health, at the age of 87. He had been one of three founding members of the Commission to be named an Honorary Commissioner.

Haverty was among the last of the surviving “titans” of the councils of the American Medical Association who championed the rise of the physician assistant concept at its inception in the 1960s. A graduate of Princeton



University and the Medical College of Georgia, he was a prominent pediatrician in Atlanta when, in 1968, he was appointed the first Dean of the School of Health Sciences at Georgia State University. He was a member of the AMA’s Committee on Allied

Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA) when he was appointed by the American Academy of Pediatrics to be their representative on the Board of the new Commission.

Always an advocate of allied health in general, and the physician assistant profession in particular, Haverty served variously, over several decades, as President of the Medical Association of Georgia, and of the Association of Schools of the Allied Health Professions. He served on the boards of the

Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, and the National Board of Medical Examiners. Locally he served on the Atlanta Red Cross Board and on the Board of the Georgia health Foundation.

Always engaging and personable, Rhodes Haverty will be missed by all who knew him.

*Photo of J. Rhodes Haverty, MD, courtesy of Stars of the South. Retrieved at [http://southernirishamericaawards.com/honorees/rhodes\\_haverty.php](http://southernirishamericaawards.com/honorees/rhodes_haverty.php)*



Visit our Web site to see what's "new" in PA History!

[www.pahx.org](http://www.pahx.org)

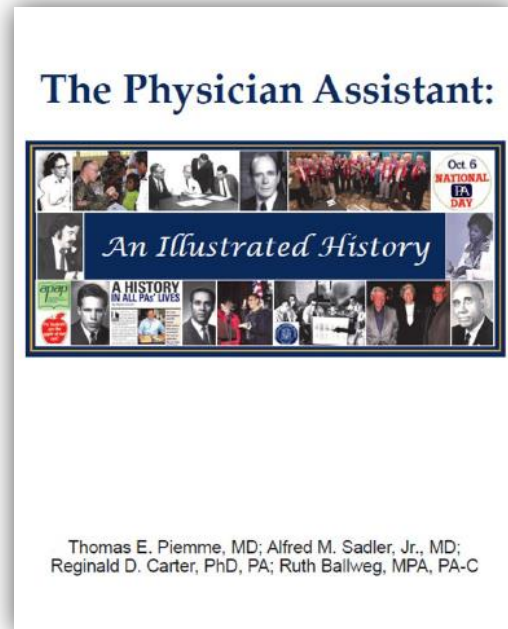
# The Physician Assistant: *An Illustrated History*

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.

## 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**



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

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.*

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

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