



# Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the Physician Assistant History Society

## Message from the President

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

I am writing this after returning from Boston’s highly successful AAPA annual meeting. The event was superbly organized and held in the expansive Convention and Exhibition Center, not far from the Harbor or “Habah” as a true Bostonian might say. We have come a long way from the First National Conference held at the Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, TX - in April 1973. That pioneering event was jointly sponsored by AAPA and APAP (PAEA) and was attended by 275 hearty souls.

The day before the 2014 conference, I had the pleasure of participating in a seminar with Boston University’s entering PA class of 25 students. The co-presenter was Robin Hunter Buskey, who is currently a Commander in the U.S. Public Health Service and serves as the Federal Prison system’s Chief physician assistant. The attached photo shows us with Mary Warner, Trustee of the PA History Society and the Program Director of BU’s one month old program. It is clear from our interactions with faculty and students that the program is off to a flying start. *(Continued on pg. 4)*



Mary Warner, MMSc, PA-C, Alfred Sadler, Jr., MD, and Robin Hunter Buskey, DHSc, PA-C at Boston University PA Program

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## History Society Developing Educational Toolkit

**Reginald Carter, PhD, PA**

Over the past 10 years, the PA History Society has spent much time and effort in identifying, processing, digitizing and preserving primary and secondary source materials and making these materials available through the Society’s Illustrated History Website and Book. A major goal of the Society this year is to develop an *Educational Toolkit on the History and Legacy of the Physician Assistant Profession* to help students learn and appreciate the development, growth and impact that the PA Profession has had on American Medicine for the past 50 years.

The Toolkit is a compendium of PowerPoint™ slides, photographs, video and audio clips that can be integrated into personalized lectures; a series of

self-directed learning modules; a Syllabus of major themes that can be explored using the PAHx Society's Illustrated History Website; a selected bibliography of articles to use as reference readings; a textbook primer - *The Physician Assistant: An Illustrated History*; and two DVDs - *The Way We Were: A Conversation with the PA Profession's Early Leaders* and *Learning from History: How Military Corpsmen set the Stage for the PA Profession*.

The Society plans to conduct faculty focus group seminars this fall to explain and demonstrate the functionality of the Educational Toolkit and to obtain faculty feedback. Also, the Society will be seeking Associate Member Programs to beta-test the first five self-directed, learning modules that are currently under development by staff and the Society's Archives and Programs Committee. The

enriched by collaborations with the Duke University Medical Center Archives (DUMC) and the Society's growing Associate Members including PA educational programs and AAPA constituent organizations.

## New Enhancements to PAHx Website

**Jeff Martineck, Archivist**

Since its formation, the History Society has amassed a sizable collection of both physical and digital images, videos and literature about the profession. Now that we have these resources, one of our biggest goals is to make them accessible to all PAs. Our website is the means by which we hope to achieve this, and we have made great strides in that direction.

We have both added and updated pages to feature new content and compile various related materials into one easily accessible place. An example of this is our Collection page, where we feature links to digital exhibits which contain informative text and images regarding people, events, and movements important to the profession's history. We have posted links to albums of related images on our Photos page which feature some of the many pictures donated to the Society. We have also expanded access to our videos and have started



Educational Toolkit is a continuum of the Society's efforts to make the history of the PA profession come alive, meaningful and inspirational for future generations of physician assistants. It is made possible by a long-standing partnership of the Society with the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) and the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA). The scope and content of the Educational Toolkit has been and continues to be



producing our own narrated video clips using pictures and videos donated to our archives. These “History Clips” can also be found on our Videos page.

Most of these links to specific materials in our collection can be found under the various sections of the Illustrated History tab on our website. However, the materials we feature are just the tip of the iceberg, given the size of our collection. Using the Search Options page under the Information & Links tab, you can keyword search for information from our resources. You can search the PAHx site, our PastPerfect online database (which is a catalog of most of the items in our collection), the Duke Medical Center Archives, and Duke Medspace. By typing in keywords of the information you are looking for, each of these options is likely to return some relevant results.

We make an effort to constantly improve our website, and new content is being featured all the time. Please visit our website at [www.pahx.org](http://www.pahx.org), and share your comments with us.

## National Board of Medical Examiners Celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting in Washington, DC

**Thomas E. Piemme, MD, Past President**

The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) held its 100<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Washington, DC, April 3-4, at the famous Willard Hotel, site of its founding in 1915. The first day was devoted to a retrospective on the achievements of the NBME over a century of involvement in certification and licensure of physicians and its influence on other occupations within the health professions.

Among the highlights was a panel discussion of the singularly influential 1973 report from the Committee on Goals and Priorities, entitled, *Evaluation in the Continuum of Medical Education*. While controversial at the time, the so-called “GAP

Committee” left a legacy of change in testing and measurement in medicine. As one of two surviving members of the Committee, I was privileged to lead off the discussion that included representatives of the Federation of State Medical Boards, and the Association of American Medical Colleges. Among the most noteworthy changes that emerged from the GAP Report were:

- The development of a robust research and development department within the NBME that, in turn, led to criterion-referenced standards for passing examinations, and to computer-based testing and administration of examinations – now used by virtually all medical specialties and related health occupations.
- The establishment in 1989, after years of conflict and compromise, of a single path to medical licensure for both U.S.-trained, and foreign medical graduates.
- The involvement by the NBME in the examination of persons, other than physicians, in the practice of medicine – specifically the physician assistant.

The development of a physician assistant certifying examination was an early recommendation by the Committee, ratified by the Board in March of 1972. John Hubbard, visionary President of the Board at the time, promptly appointed a “Special Study Committee” (among whose members was Fred Sadler, our History Society President) and recruited Barbara Andrew to direct the project. With remarkable speed, a project to define the role and responsibility of the PA was undertaken, from which a blueprint of an examination was developed. Test committees were then appointed, and the examination readied for its first administration in December of 1973.

Within a year, fourteen national organizations had come together to form the National Commission on Certification of the Physician Assistant (NCCPA) to determine eligibility and set standards, while the NBME continued to develop the examination under contract with the NCCPA.

Although the examination is now developed and administered entirely by the NCCPA, the profession will always owe a debt to the NBME for its role in propelling the physician assistant concept into the position it holds in American medicine today.

## Message from the President

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

*(Continued from pg. 1)*

I met with Suzanne Greenberg, who was one of the founders of APAP in 1972 and served as its Secretary for four years and later as President. Her record of 39 years as Program Director of Northeastern's pioneering PA program may never be broken. We had a lot of catching up to do after nearly 40 years. Some of the joys of our profession are the long-term friendships we develop.

In this issue, our Society's immediate past President, Tom Piemme, reports on his participation in the 100th anniversary of the Founding of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). The NBME administered the first Certifying Examination for PAs in December 1973. In May, Tom delivered the Commencement address to the graduating class of the USC PA Program upon the invitation of Program Director, Kevin Lohenry.

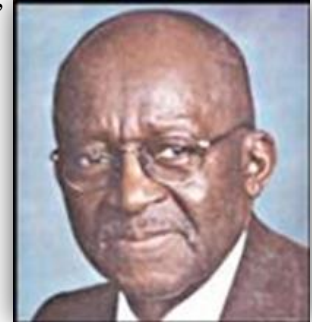
Historian Emeritus, Reggie Carter will be addressing the annual USPHS Commissioned Officers Foundation Symposium later this month. Our Trustees and Historians are available for presentations - just let us know what your needs are.

In perusing our website recently, I clicked on the "Historical Happenings" page. I recommend that PA History buffs review the back issues, which not only will bring the reader information on the Society's past history, but on the profession's history as well. Some of this information is found nowhere else. And check out our continually updated website (see Jeff Martineck's piece on page 2 of this newsletter).

Please [write to us](#) with comments and suggestions. We always enjoy hearing from you.

## Charles Phillips, Early MEDEX Graduate, Passes Away

Charles E. Phillips, a graduate of MEDEX Class 2, died on May 4, 2014 at the age of 82. Charlie was born in Wilmington, Delaware. Upon graduation from high school, he joined the United



**Charles E. Phillips**  
1931 - 2014

States Air Force, and served 21 years as an Air Force Medic. He was the first African American to be selected for the program at the University of Washington, graduating in 1971. He was one of the many MEDEX students, fulfilling the goal of preparing career independent duty corpsmen to become PAs.

Charlie spent his entire Physician Assistant career at Group Health Cooperative in Seattle where he was seen as a compassionate and outstanding clinician and an effective pioneer of the PA role. Group Health consumers who saw him as patients often said that they "never forgot him." His family's obituary for him says: "Charles was a man of faith, defined by a life of service to family, country, friends and his patients."

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**Voice from the Past: The “Other”  
AAPA**

*Reginald Carter, PhD, PA, Historian Emeritus*

The Society recently received an email from Peter G. Hogan seeking information about the American Association of Physicians Assistants (AAPA) based in New York City in the 1970s. Attached to the email was a certificate awarded to him by the (other) AAPA in 1974. We provided the information he sought, and Mr. Hogan granted the Society permission to use the digital image of his certificate and share his story.

The AAPA was co-founded by two physicians, administered by Paul F. Palace in 1970 and was headquartered in New York City. At first the organization primarily registered



mostly proprietary trained PAs who had little or no formal academic-based education. Basically, any paraprofessional working with a physician was eligible for membership. Later, however, the organization became interested in adding formally educated PAs to its ranks and intensified recruiting efforts in direct competition with the widely recognized American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), founded by graduates and students at Duke University in 1968. Once accreditation and certification standards were established for the physician assistant profession, states began enacting legislation that used these credentials as their standards for practice. Consequently, individuals, certified or registered by the American Association of Physicians Assistants, found that they could not be legally employed as physician assistants and the organization ceased functioning in the mid-1970s.

Hogan’s personal story is interesting and typical of corpsmen who could not find meaningful employment

as civilians in medicine. Trained as a U.S. Navy hospital corpsman at Great Lakes, Illinois in 1965, he served on the carrier, USS Lexington, and later with the U.S. Marines, 2nd Division for four years. Hogan states that “for a small town boy from Irvington, N.J., who had not even taken a single science or biology course in high school, the world had been opened.” As a civilian, Hogan was trained on-the-job as a respiratory technician and a cardiovascular perfusionist. Although gratifying, the jobs did not pay well. Hogan believed that membership in the AAPA would provide greater opportunities in the health field but soon realized

that without college credits and an acceptable “PA certificate,” his chance of working as a physician assistant was slim. After a brief stint as an LPN in New Jersey, Hogan found satisfying work in a nonmedical field. After spending 22 years away from medicine, Hogan decided recently, at age 65, to become a registered nurse and work with Veterans.



Visit our Web site to see what’s “new” in PA History!

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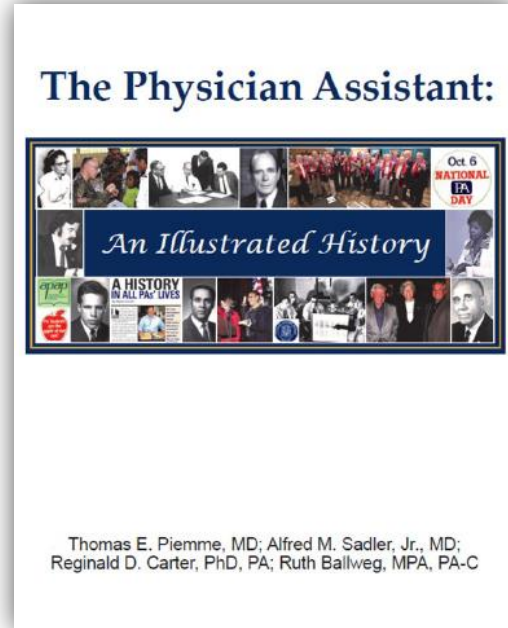
# The Physician Assistant: *An Illustrated History*

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

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