

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Don Pedersen, PhD, PA

University of Utah



Don Pedersen began his PA career at the University of Utah School of Medicine's MEDEX Project in 1978. Shortly after graduation, he joined the faculty of the newly formed Utah Physician Assistant Program (UPAP). Under Don's leadership, UPAP began to thrive. After a decade of teaching, Don became UPAP's second program director.

Among other accomplishments during his tenure, the program grew from a certificate program to a master's program. Bob Bunnell, MS, PA-C, former executive director of the Utah Academy of Physician Assistants said, "Don's work with UPAP elevated the quality for education from a program on the brink of extinction to repeatedly being listed among the top five graduate schools in the United States."

Don was instrumental in shaping Utah's laws on PAs, which have served as a model for legislation nationwide. In addition to his educational and clinical work, Don still found time to build the profession in other ways. He was founder and editor-in-chief of what is now the *Journal of Physician Assistant Education* and has written dozens of book chapters and articles. In 1997, he and his wife Kathy donated \$25,000 to start PAEA's Small Grants Program – now called the Don Pedersen Research Grants Program. He has served in many different leadership roles, including as president of the Utah Academy of Physician Assistants, the PA Foundation, and AAPA.

As Alfred M. Sadler, Jr., MD, immediate past president of the PA History Society, said, "He is a generous exemplar of leadership with humility – a quality far too rare in our world today."