

# HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

## NEWSLETTER OF THE PA HISTORY SOCIETY



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### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Stephen D. Wilson, PA-C*



The PA History Society enters the new year, which is our 21st year of recording the remarkable history of the PA profession, with great enthusiasm. This year we welcome four new Trustees to our Board. The applicants were all excellent and the final determinations were tough for the Society's

Nominating Committee. The Board selected [Greg P. Thomas](#), PA-C Emeritus, MPH, DFAAPA and [Debra S. Munsell](#), DHSc, PA-C, DFAAPA, as the new Trustees. Mr. Thomas is a PA with more than 45 years of experience and has recently retired after serving employed positions with the AAPA, PAEA, and NCCPA. He will bring a deep and varied historical perspective of serving the PA profession. Dr. Munsell is a PA of 23 years and currently serves as an Associate Professor at the Mississippi State University PA Program. She noted in her letter that: “Preserving the history of the profession for future clinicians and policy makers is essential to the progression and evolution of our profession.” Also joining us as the NCCPA appointed Trustee is [Robin Hunter-Buskey](#), DHSc, CPHQ, CCHP, CDCES, PA-C. She is a Captain in the Public Health Service and is

*(President’s Message, continued on page 2)*

### POP QUIZ: DO YOU KNOW YOUR PA HISTORY?

*Which of the following physicians used former military corpsmen and medics as their first recruits to be educated as physician assistants?*

1. Henry Silver with the University of Colorado
2. Richard (Dick) Smith with the University of Washington

3. Hu Myers with Alderson-Broadus College (now University)
4. Eugene A. Stead, Jr., with Duke University

**Answer Options:**

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| A. 1, 2 & 3 | D. 4 only      |
| B. 1 & 3    | E. 1, 2, 3 & 4 |
| C. 2 & 4    |                |

**You can find the correct answer on page 9 of this newsletter.**

*(President's Message, continued from page 1)*

well known in the PA community for her leadership and dedication. She currently serves in the United States Public Health Service as a Health Service Officer with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigration & Custom Enforcement (ICE), Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) and the ICE Health Corps (IHSC). Our new Student Trustee Sophi Leah Scarnewman, PA-S, is studying at the Stanford University PA Program. In her letter of interest, she stated: "As a student trustee, I would be a point of connection between the past and the future of our field, taking the wisdom I gain from engaging with PA history and illuminating its relevance and importance to my PA student colleagues across the world." Her biography will be available on our website later this month. We are in good hands.

The Society has pioneered several major projects. All have been aimed at honoring and showcasing the tremendous development and accomplishments of PAs in professional development and patient care. Our most recent major project was the completion of our educational resource, Physician Assistants as Social Innovators in Healthcare. An example of social innovation and professional development, Physician Assistants as Social Innovators in Healthcare, documents the transformations that have taken place over the years and explores the future of the PA profession to ensure PA innovation continues. You may get your copy by [clicking here!](#)

At our spring meeting, the Board will determine the next significant project to be accomplished by the hard work and dedication of the PA History Society Board and Staff. It is an exciting time for the Society to once again achieve great things.

During the last Board meeting of 2022, the Trustees selected new leadership for the coming year. [Robert Smith](#), PA-C, MS, DHSc, DFAAPA, has been elected as President-Elect and Trustee [William Kohlhepp](#), DHSc, PA-C, DFAAPA, was elected to the position of Secretary/Treasurer. These individuals have a proven

record of leadership and unselfish service to their patients and the community. Dr. Smith's contributions to the health of the Latino community in Texas and around the U.S. has been noteworthy and his leadership is well respected. Dr. Kohlhepp has been a part of the profession's development since the 1970s and has served as Speaker of the AAPA House of Delegates, President of the AAPA, President of the PAEA, and Chairman of the NCCPA Board. We look forward to their continued strong work for you and the Society.

Dr. Smith and Dr. Kohlhepp, along with the rest of the Board, will have significant duties this year as we develop our next big project, continue the development of our biographical library, and expand our services to you and our partners through the review and revision of our strategic plan. There is nothing better than charging into the next twenty years of PA history! Please join us in making sure your PA history is captured!

### Welcome PAHX Historian Tricia Marriott



[Patricia "Tricia" Marriott](#), PA-C, MPAS, MJ, CHC, DFAAPA, joins the PAHX as Historian. Tricia has been a certified PA for 37 years and currently serves as a PA educator and Program Director at the University of Saint Joseph in Connecticut. In her new position as the Society's Historian, Tricia brings a wealth of leadership, public speaking, writing and research experience as a PA educator, along with a strong dedication to preserving and promoting the PA profession. Some of Tricia's historian responsibilities include working with the PAHX Trustees and staff to grow the Society's archival, library and museum collections, expanding the Society's website by writing biographies and developing online exhibits, conducting oral history interviews, participating in speaking engagements, and writing articles for [Historical Happenings](#). Learn more about Historian Marriott on page 6 in our feature titled, *In Her Own Words*.

## Memories of Joyce Nichols Shared by Fellow PAs

*Joshua Penninger, MSM, PA-S2*

[Joyce Nichols](#), the first female PA, was an incredible leader who not only passionately served low-income, marginalized communities in North Carolina but also helped establish the Minority Affairs Committee within AAPA while on the AAPA Board of Directors. While she sadly passed away in 2012, PAs whom she worked closely with continue to share stories, fond memories, and lessons they learned from her.

[Dr. Reginald Carter](#), who worked closely with Ms. Nichols for many decades as he led Duke’s PA program, remembers a pivotal moment in his career when she taught him how even our best well-thought intentions can be harmful. Dr. Carter, Ms. Nichols, and Lovest Alexander, Jr., strongly desired to open a free clinic within a specific low-income community in Durham, NC. After some planning amongst themselves, they finally went to the community to present them with their plan, fully expecting them to embrace the idea of a free clinic. Dr. Carter recalls, however, that “after presenting our proposal, one woman became very agitated, angry, and even suspicious of our motives!” Others from the community joined in and became repulsed by this plan as well, suggesting that they needed healthcare delivered to them that was not just seen as “charity care.” Dr. Carter

remembers that during this time, “Joyce listened patiently, never raised her voice, and eventually got the attention of those in the room. She calmly said that it was apparent that establishing the free clinic, as it was proposed, would not be acceptable; the residents had spoken. Other avenues of providing healthcare to the residents would need to be explored through additional meetings.” Ms. Nichols empathized with this community, noting that even though they had no malicious intent, their plans needed this community’s input and buy-in if they were to be successful. She had the gift of listening and the discernment for “when to move ahead or wait,” as Dr. Carter phrased it. He ended this story by saying he “learned a valuable lesson that day.”



Student Joyce Nichols, c 1969 (Courtesy of Duke University Archives)

*(Memories of Joyce Nichols, continued on page 4)*

## Celebrating Black History Month

Visit the PA History Society’s [website here](#) to check out the *Black History Month* feature to learn more about the contributions African American PAs have made not only to the PA profession, but also to their patients and communities!

John Davis (left) and Edward Williams (right) at Military Dining Out, circa 2008. The two individuals in the middle are unidentified.



AAPA African Heritage Caucus held during the AAPA Annual Conference in Miami Beach, FL May 1993. Left to Right: Unidentified, Wendell Wharton, Brenda Jasper, Sharon Rowland Scott, Richard Smith, Les Howard, and Rosa Williams.

*(Memories of Joyce Nichols, continued from page 3)*

Ms. Nichols was someone who had an immense passion for serving the community she had grown up in. “She was always looking to make sure that the community of people that she served was being taken care of,” recalls [Robert Wooten](#). What Mr. Wooten remembers most about Ms. Nichols was that she was incredibly honest and never afraid to tell you what she was thinking, particularly as she mentored him during his North Carolina Academy of PAs Presidency. “If you came for advice, you better be ready to get it,” Mr. Wooten reminisces, who later became the first African American President of AAPA.

“Three first-year PA students packed into a Volkswagen and traveled from Long Island, New York, to attend the 1984 AAPA conference in Denver, Colorado,” [Captain Robin Hunter-Buskey](#) recalls. During this conference, a special moment took place that Captain Hunter-Buskey will forever hold dear. “After traveling all those miles, I got to the conference and found my way to the Minority Affairs Committee meeting with other PA students I had met, but as we entered the room, we realized that it had already started!” Captain Hunter-Buskey and her student colleagues slowly and quietly tiptoed to the seats in the back of the room when Joyce Nichols suddenly called them out. She asked if they were PA students, and thankfully one of them mustered the courage to respond, but what she did next was shocking! Ms. Nichols pointed to the empty seats at the head table and told them this was where they needed to sit. She proceeded to tell them that as PA students, they were the most important [people] in this room and deserved to be at the front where they could be involved in the conversation. Joyce’s dynamic and inclusive leadership forever inspired Captain Hunter-Buskey, where she would later become the first African American PA to chair the NCCPA, among many other notable accomplishments.



(Left to Right) John Davis, Joyce Nichols, and Percy Golson at the AAPA Conference held in San Francisco, California, 2006. Photograph courtesy of the PAHx archives).

## Do You Have the Latest Book About the PA Profession?

### *Physician Assistants as Social Innovators in Healthcare*

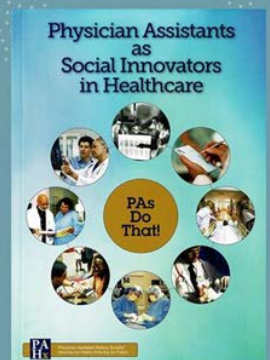
The PA History Society’s latest book, *Physician Assistants as Social Innovators in Healthcare*, is the perfect educational resource for PA faculty, students, researchers, and legislators! This book describes the evolution of the PA profession and its role throughout the healthcare system. This dynamic publication defines the development of the PA profession in meeting healthcare needs yesterday, today, and for tomorrow. *Get your copy today:*

\$35.00 + shipping via [PAHx website](#)

\$39.95 + shipping via [Amazon](#)

### Book Fun Facts:

- 14 Chapters
- 20 Authors
- 70 Contributors & Reviewers
- 24-page Index
- 789 References
- 408 Pages



## Be a Part of PA History: Share Your Pandemic Story

The PA History Society is creating a new oral history interview collection. Do you have a unique COVID-19 Pandemic story or experience? Would you like to share how your clinic moved to a telemedicine setting during the Pandemic or share other ways that your practice was impacted? Please contact the PA History Society through email at: [contactus@pahx.org](mailto:contactus@pahx.org)

Oral history interviews will be conducted through Zoom and last approximately 30 minutes. Questions for the interview will be emailed to you in advance of the recording. Videos of the interview will not be posted on our PAHx website or entered into our archives until they have been approved by the interviewee after editing.



If you would like to see our other oral history interview series, please see below:

- [PAs and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic](#): This oral history series highlights the role that PAs and the AAPA LGBT Caucus played in healthcare during the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s.
- [Medics and Corpsmen](#): This project was originally in collaboration with the Maine Military Museum. It is a collection of interviews with PAs who began their health practitioner careers as either military medics or corpsmen.
- [The PA Profession in the Netherlands](#): This series interviews those who helped start and shape the PA profession in the Netherlands.

## Remembering

**Ann A. Bliss RN, BS, MSW, LCSW**

*Alfred M. Sadler, Jr., MD*

On December 7, 2022, we lost one of the pioneering nurses who believed wholeheartedly in the potential and wisdom of the PA profession during its founding years. Ann Bliss was 89 years old when she passed away.



Ms. Bliss was actively involved with the Yale Physician’s Associate Program from 1970 – 1996, where she taught Personality Development and Psychopathology. An active member of the Connecticut Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology, she continued in the private practice of psychotherapy until her death.

Ms. Bliss played an important role nationally by coauthoring the first book on PAs “The Physician’s Assistant – Today and Tomorrow”, with Alfred M. Sadler Jr., MD, and Blair L. Sadler, JD, published by Yale Press in 1972 and funded and distributed widely by five New York based foundations. The book was updated and expanded by the authors in 1975 as “The Physician’s Assistant – Today and Tomorrow: Issues Confronting New Health Practitioners” and is available on the PA History Society’s website for [free download here](#).

Ms. Bliss believed that organized nursing, which focused increasingly on wellness care, should return to its roots in the care of sick patients in collaboration with physicians. She served as Managing Editor of the PA Journal during its early years in the 1970s and as a consultant to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation from

*(Remembering Ann Bliss, continued on page 6)*



*(Remembering Ann Bliss, continued from page 5)*

1973 – 1978 working with Alfred Sadler and Terrance Keenan on funding collaborative PA and NP education programs (the Stanford and UC Davis Programs were examples). She served on the PA History Society’s Board from 2011-2014. Additional material is available about Ms. Bliss in her Biography on the [PAHx website here](#).

Ms. Bliss leaves four stepchildren, a foster daughter, eleven grandchildren, and eleven great grandchildren. Her beloved husband, the Rev. William Bliss, predeceased her in 2002.

Excerpts for this article were taken from Ms. Bliss’ obituary.

**In Her Own Words: Tricia Marriott,  
PA-C, MPAS, MJ, CHC, DFAAPA**

*Bruna Varalli-Claypool, BBA, MHS,  
PA-C, DFAAPA*



**What attracted you to the PA Profession? Academia?**

My junior year in college, I became disenchanted with the Pre-Med track. Competition was fierce and people were not very nice. I met a PA at a Career Fair who handed me a book of the 55 PA programs in the country, which led me to the only PA program in the State of Connecticut at the time, which was Yale. I attended their Open House with my parents. The student and graduate panel sold me on the spot. They were so excited about their profession and the opportunities! I applied to 6 schools, with no support or letters of recommendation from my pre-med advisor, and never looked back. I’d do it all again in a heartbeat.

Academia was not in the plan. I thought I’d finish out my years in hospital administration. However, the Universe had a very different plan. After a big promotion

to a regional level position with oversight responsibilities for PAs & APRNS in a hospital system, my role, along with many other management positions, were eliminated abruptly. After 6 months of



searching for my next role, I learned about the faculty position at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) PA program. Four months into my faculty position as Associate Professor, COVID hit, and PA education was turned on its head. I took on the program director role 3 months later. The rest, as they say, is history.

**What are your top 3 priorities as you begin your new role as PAHx Historian?**

1. Getting it right. Reg Carter has some very big shoes to fill. I do not want to disappoint.
2. Helping PA educators transform PA history into something that resonates with our new generations of PAs, without sounding like a dinosaur. That means we have to figure out the WIFM-“What’s in it for me?” (FYI-I learned that working with the Advocacy team at AAPA.)
3. There are so very many PAs doing great things in small ways that deserve to be highlighted. I want to find them and capture their stories. The big names and roles are also important, but easily found in this digital age. I would love for PAs to send me suggestions for the “grunt” stories.

**What is your favorite quote?**

- It’s a tie.
- “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” Viktor E. Frankl
  - “Chance favors the prepared mind.” Louis Pasteur

*(In Her Own Words, continued on page 7)*

*(In Her Own Words, continued from page 6)*

**What is your favorite pastime/hobbies?**

My “hobbies” seem to revolve around the PA profession. I really enjoy working at the State and National level with other PAs, with a common purpose to advance the profession or educate key stakeholders about PAs. Not really a hobby, but it is how I spend a lot of my free time. My rescue cats (Lenny and Squiggy - I did not name them!) keep me entertained.

This is Lenny acting professorial, helping me write my lectures. They like to contribute, especially during Zoom sessions.



**What is the last book you read?**

I’m currently reading “My Century: A Memoir of War, Peace, and Pioneering in the Operating Room” by Kristaps Keggi, MD. I had the tremendous privilege to work with Dr. Kris Keggi for almost 19 of my 26 years in Orthopaedics. We performed total hip replacements and revisions at Yale right up until his retirement at the age of 82. Dr. Keggi played a part in the development of the PA program at Yale: I plan to dig into that a bit and write his bio as soon as I can.

**What did you learn about yourself during your time at AAPA?**

I learned a LOT! ... about the profession, about myself, and about communication and advocacy. It was my very favorite job and I miss it terribly! I learned that I desperately want people (stakeholders) to understand the PA role, along with the rules, and the tremendous possibilities when done right. I enjoyed dispelling myths and bringing decision makers to the table to break down barriers. I also learned I really like the rush of public speaking, especially the Q&A afterwards and thinking on my feet. I get a similar joy in the classroom. I find myself in hotel lobbies and convention center hallways answering questions after almost every talk.

**What is the most common misconception regarding PA reimbursement?**

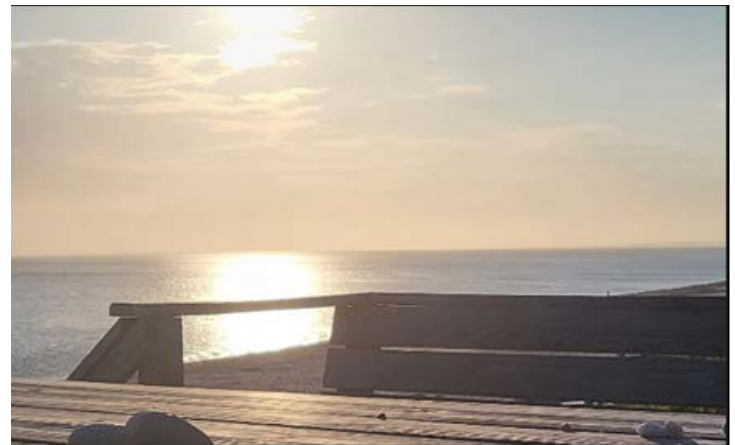
It is that practices lose out on reimbursement for services provided by a PA. If a practice is not making a profit margin on the work provided by a PA, they are probably not deploying that PA effectively and/or their accountant needs new glasses. I really loved delivering the “Contribution Margin” section of my talks, because math doesn’t lie.

**What do you do for fun?**

This is a hard question for me. Given a choice, I’d be on a beach, near a beach all day, every day if I could. Ocean, no lakes or rivers for me. I love coloring, but rarely get to do it.

**Next vacation location?**

Cape Cod every year, bay side.



**Video games or board games?**

I do my WORDLE every day and share my results with my mom. But, our family really loves jigsaw puzzles. We can sit for hours barely speaking a word until we finish. We have a whole strategy and are pretty serious about it.

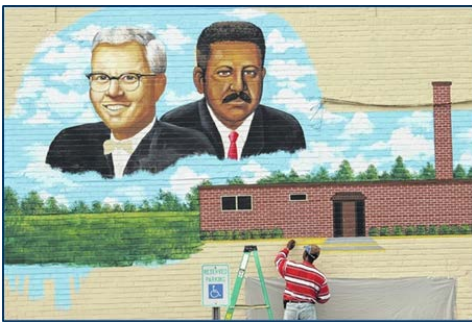
**Last live concert you attended?**

I am a Fanilow. I have seen Barry Manilow so many times!

## The Greatness of Garland

Connie Mara, PAHx

In rural North Carolina, between Fayetteville and Wilmington, stands a small town known as Garland. It is here that you can find the manufacturing of fine garments, blueberry farming and a colorful mural named “The Greatness of Garland.” This mural was designed and painted upon the iconic Brooks Brothers building by artist Robert Hall in 2015. His artwork celebrates two of the town’s most honored residents, Dr. Amos Neill Johnson and Henry Lee “Buddy” Treadwell.



Back in the 1940s, Dr. Johnson was Garland’s town physician and Buddy Treadwell served as his informally trained assistant. As an assistant, Buddy learned laboratory skills and other medical procedures, including placing and removing sutures in patients. By 1950, Dr. Johnson trusted Buddy to manage his medical practice while he was traveling to AMA meetings and other medical conferences.

A decade later, Buddy began accompanying patients to the Duke University Medical Center for diagnostic referrals and treatment. Dr. Eugene Stead, Jr., was working in the Department of Medicine at Duke University during this time. Dr. Stead was inspired by how an assistant could be used to help deliver health care services, especially during times when physicians were difficult to find. He used this doctor/assistant concept to begin a 2-year physician assistant training program at Duke University. Medical students from Duke University received community-based clinical training as they observed Dr. Johnson and Buddy at work in Garland.

*(The Greatness of Garland, continued on page 9)*

## From the Archives: *The Dissertation and Thesis Collection*

Michelle N. Schabowski, MSIS, CA

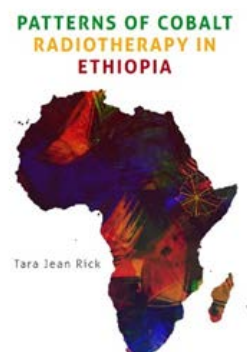
Did you know the inspiration for the PA History Society came in part from a student thesis? In 1995, pre-med student Natalie Holt published *Confusion’s Masterpiece: The Development of the Physician Assistant Profession*. In her thesis, Holt laid out the history of the PA profession and subtly reminded her readers of the importance of learning and recording the past of one’s profession. *Confusion’s Masterpiece* would later be published in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* in 1998 (Volume 72, Issue 02).

Currently, the PA History Society Library holds 39 dissertations and theses either by PAs or about the PA profession. The earliest is from 1973, “The Physician’s Assistant: Interorganizational Influence on the Creation of a New Occupation” by Donna Ver Steeg. The one from furthest away is Sierra Leone PA Musa Baimba Sillah’s *Assessing the Roles of Community Health Officers in Health Care Delivery in Sierra Leone: A Case Study of Western Area Urban and Rural Districts*, published in 2022.

Sillah’s dissertation isn’t the only international one in our collection either! We have “Antecedents of Ethical Decision Making by Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners: Validation of Instruments and their Application” by Dutch PA Luppoo Kuilman (2020) and “Barriers and Facilitating Factors to the Integration of the First UK-Trained Physician Associates onto Secondary Care Services in the British National Health Service” by Tamara Ritsema (2019), to name a few.

If you would like to browse the Society’s dissertations, you may do so by [clicking here](#). If you would like to submit a copy of your own thesis or dissertation to be added to the PA History Society’s library, you can reach us at: [contactus@pahx.org](mailto:contactus@pahx.org)

*(Image: one of many PA written dissertations in the PAHx collection)*





## PA History Society Trustees and Staff

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Email: [bvaralli@ouhsc.edu](mailto:bvaralli@ouhsc.edu)

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### *(The Greatness of Garland, continued from page 8)*

Buddy Treadwell played a significant role in setting the groundwork for the PA profession. He was made an Honorary Physician Assistant by the Duke PA program in 1970 and represents a piece of Garland's history. The mural remains vividly displayed in downtown Garland and continues to bring the town a sense of pride.



*(Mural images courtesy of the Sampson Independent, c. Sept. 4, 2015)*

## **POP QUIZ ANSWER: "C"**

Eugene Stead, MD, developed a 2-year academic-based Physician Assistant Program at Duke University in 1965; Richard Smith, MD, developed a joint academic/community-based MEDEX Program at the University of Washington in 1968. Both used former military corpsmen and medics as their first recruits for training. Henry Silver's first students were primarily nurses. Hu Myers's first students were 4-year liberal art students, with or without prior health care experience.

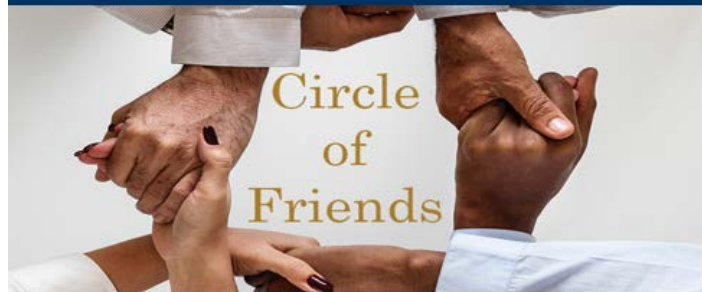
## **Stay in Touch with PAHx thru**

### **Social Media!**

Please be sure to follow the PA History Society on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to receive updates.



## PA History Society's



Support the work of the PA History Society so that we can continue to develop exceptional projects! Through the help of donations from our generous patrons we have been able to:

- Created **educational resources** for PA students, such as our Learning Modules for PA programs and a variety of PA history related books.
- Established the only **PA Veterans Garden** (located at the Stead Center).
- Produced the **PA History Traveling Banner Exhibition** with the National Library of Medicine.
- Develop **PA Historian Boot Camp** workshops.
- Update our interactive **website** to be more dynamic and user friendly to promote the PA profession to people around the globe.
- Add new and interesting stories in our **Biography & Oral History Interview depository**.
- Maintain the archives, assist researcher requests with PA history, and continue **to preserve, grow, and share our collections**.

To see more of the interesting projects that the Society has undertaken, please visit our **Project Timeline** on the Society's website [by clicking here](#).

Become a Friend of the Society and help us to continue doing our important work of preserving and sharing the rich history of the PA profession and the contributions that PAs make! The Society offers these tax-deductible levels of giving:

**“Lifetime” Circle of Friends:**

A one-time donation of \$2,000 or more for individuals under the age 65 years, or a one-time donation of \$1,000 or more for individuals aged 65+ years or retired.

**“Annual” Circle of Friends:**

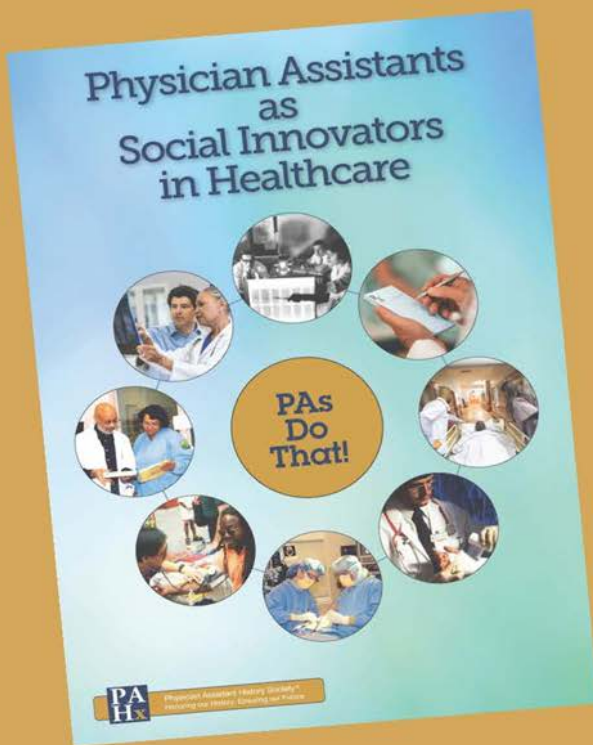
An annual donation of \$100 or more each year.



As a Friend of the Society, your name will be listed on the **PA History Society Friends webpage** and you will get a special shout out on our social media sites!

To donate by credit card, please visit [our website](#) and click on the gold “Become a Friend” to be directed to our secure PayPal site. You do not need a PayPal account. Simply click on the white “Donate with a Debit or Credit Card” button to enter your credit card information. Alternatively, you may send a check, payable to the “PA History Society”, to our office at: 12000 Findley Road, Suite 100, Johns Creek, GA 30097. For more information, please visit our [website](#), send us an email [contactus@pahx.org](mailto:contactus@pahx.org), or call us 678-417-8682.

*The perfect educational resource for PA faculty, students, researchers, and legislators!*

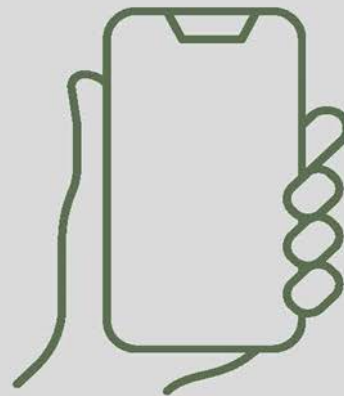


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