



Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the Physician Assistant History Society

History Society Provides an Assist as PAEA Scores at its Fortieth Anniversary Celebration

Twenty-two of them roamed the Exhibit Hall at the major reception of the Annual PAEA Meeting in Seattle in early November: Twenty-two of the 36 living past presidents, wearing distinctive ruby-colored academic stoles. (Ruby is the classic color for 40th anniversary celebrations.) As they circulated, they found themselves signing commemorative posters that were being distributed at the Society booth. As the reception came to a close, attendees gathered around, as champagne toasts were offered by Fred Sadler, first President of the Association in 1972, and Tony Brenneman, its current President. As the participants exited, they were given keepsakes of the champagne flutes.

A record attendance of 670 educators were treated to reminders of their past throughout the week. As

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participants entered the ballroom for the opening plenary session, projected onto the jumbo screens at the front were photos of past meetings and social gatherings over four decades of Association history.



Past Presidents of the PAEA toast to 40 years of PA education at the Annual PAEA Meeting in November
Photo courtesy of the Physician Assistant Education Association.

Association veterans were reminded of their younger days.



The first President of PAEA, Fred Sadler, MD, gives a toast at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of PAEA

Outside the ballroom were banners displaying a timeline of events in the life of the organization, and two large displays of even more photographs from the past. Inside the Exhibit Hall, at the History Society booth, a large screen monitor displayed photographs of the first graduated class of 114 of the Association’s member programs.

the PAEA staff for their superior organization of the meeting.

Can the Physician Assistant History Society help your organization plan for upcoming anniversary celebrations? Contact us (contactus@pahx.org).



PAHX President, Tom Piemme, MD, and Executive Director, Pam Dean, MBA, at the Society booth at PAEA

A Message from the President Thomas E. Piemme, MD

2012 was a good year for the Physician Assistant History Society, and last November, an especially good month. Earlier in that month, the Society assisted PAEA in a glorious celebration of its 40th anniversary. (See article on pg. 1) A week later, Sheila Mauldin, our Managing Director, and I reported to the Board of NCCPA, our parent organization, on the Society’s activities for the year. That was followed by the semiannual meeting of the Society itself.

Throughout the year, Dr. Fred Sadler and I have continued our quest for source documents from those organizations that have contributed to the extraordinary growth and development of the PA profession. In addition to the Academy, the Education Association, the NCCPA, ARC-PA and the American Medical Association, which I wrote about in September, we have added the National Board of Medical Examiners and the National



Timeline of events throughout PAEA history displayed at the Annual PAEA Meeting

Kudos must go to: the History Society Historian, Ruth Ballweg, who originated the concept of the “first class” photo collection, and doggedly pursued their submission by the program directors; the Society’s Historian Emeritus, Reg Carter, who created the “timeline,” and selected the images from the archives for the montage displays; Society staff members, Lori Konopka-Sauer, Keri Caudill and Linda King who designed and ordered the materials; and, above all, Jennifer Jarmin and Lisa Belding of

Library of Medicine as organizations that have given us unrestricted access to their archives, as they relate to physician assistants. Our own archival collection has grown, and through the efforts of Reginald Carter, our Historian Emeritus, indexing and cross-referencing has been refined. His major effort now is to develop “finding aids” that will allow productive research to be undertaken by PA students and faculty.

Those who have spent time on the PAHx Web site over the past two months will be aware that the “Timeline” of events in the history of the profession, expanded and enriched with links to photos, graphics, biographies and documents, is now complete. Among other functionalities, it can be abstracted to serve other purposes. For its 40th anniversary, a focused timeline of PAEA was created and displayed on banners outside the Exhibit Hall. Other additions to the Web site include a host of new biographical sketches – more than doubling the number of entries of those who have contributed to the profession. Our goal through 2013 is to increase the number to 200, to include as many as possible of the past presidents of AAPA, PAEA and the NCCPA. With the permission of the original publishers, seminal articles on the history of the profession are now being added.

At our recent meeting, Ruth Ballweg, our Historian, introduced the concept of a history “boot camp,” to which interested faculty might come for two to three days to investigate topics of particular interest. While still in the “proposal” stage, the History Society is interested in feedback on the feasibility of groups of 8-10 persons who would be expected to spend intensive time, under the guidance of our historians, searching our archives in order to produce publishable work on the history of the profession.

The number of “Associates” has grown as more programs have contributed the annual education fee. Each will be featured on the Web site with a link to its own Web site. Now being added are photos of the first graduating class of each Associate program.

Aggregated together, these were displayed on a DVD at the History Society booth in Seattle, and will be shown again at the Academy annual meeting in May.

The semiannual meeting in November was productive. The Board welcomed its newest Trustee, Raisa Polacek, a cardiovascular surgeon assistant at the Cleveland Clinic. Her first three year term will begin January 1, 2013. Judy Colver and Barbara Barzansky, whose terms ended December 31, 2012, were acknowledged with gratitude for their service.

At the recommendation of the Election Committee, Fred Sadler was unanimously elected to the office of President Elect; and Karen Mulitalo, for a two year term, to the office of Secretary/Treasurer.

The Society has created a new committee structure:

- *Archival Committee.* Chaired by Fred Sadler, the committee will be responsible for the acquisition of original materials of historical interest, and strategies for preservation and dissemination. It will review and authenticate all proposed postings on the Web site for accuracy and appropriateness.
- *Publications Committee.* The Committee will be chaired by the President, Tom Piemme. It will be responsible for the promotion of History Society programs, and for encouraging scholarly work based on Society archival materials. It will communicate regularly with the PA community regarding significant events through a quarterly Newsletter.
- *Finance Committee.* The Committee will be chaired by the Secretary/Treasurer Karen Mulitalo. The Committee will review budget preparation and financial reports prior to semiannual submission to the Board.

History Society Trustees and Staff

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Thomas E. Piemme, MD

President Elect

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Secretary/Treasurer

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Historian Emeritus

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Public Relations Assistant

Lori Konopka-Sauer

Governance Manager

Sheila Mauldin, MNM

Managing Director

- *Fundraising Committee.* The Committee will be chaired by Past President, Bill Marquardt. It will be responsible for recommending strategies for revenue generation, and communicate regularly with Associate Programs, other constituent organizations and individual donors.



PA History Society Board of Directors

A great deal of time was spent reviewing the Strategic Plan. The Society has made significant progress during 2012. The Trustees look forward to significant further progress during the New Year.

Pioneering PA Joyce Ann Nichols Passes Away

Reginald Carter, Historian Emeritus; and Justine Strand de Oliveira, Chief, Physician Assistant Division, Duke University

Unparalleled in her perseverance at opening doors for minorities and women, Joyce Ann Clayton Nichols passed away after a long battle with cancer on July 29, 2012.

Born on a tobacco farm to a large extended family in rural Person County, North Carolina, Joyce was trained as a licensed practical nurse. She was working in the cardiac care unit at Duke University Hospital when she learned about the Duke PA

Program. Having applied to the program twice and been rejected, she realized she had three impediments: She hadn't been a military corpsman, she was African-American, and she was a woman. Undaunted, on her third attempt she succeeded, entering in 1968 and graduating in 1970 as the first female graduate of the Program. She became the first African-American woman to practice as a PA in the United States.

Fighting adversity was not new to Joyce. In 1965 Joyce lived with her three children in Durham's McDougald Terrace public housing. One day after being elected president of the tenant's organization, she was served with an eviction notice. Durham's Housing Authority told her that no reason needed to be given for the eviction. She turned to the courts in a case that went all the way to the Supreme Court. On January 13, 1969, while Joyce was a student, the Court held in a unanimous decision that residents of public housing must be afforded due process.** That same year her house burned. Although no one was injured, Joyce, her husband and children lost all of their possessions. Her classmates and the faculty from Duke held a benefit dance that provided the resources to replace their possessions and allowed her to remain in school.

Following graduation, Joyce was determined to work to provide healthcare to underserved patients. With advice and assistance from Harvey Estes, Chair of the Department of Community and Family Medicine at Duke, Federal money was secured to establish a rural health clinic in Northern Durham County – one of the first such clinics in the nation – where she worked until 1972. As funding became tenuous, she and Estes persuaded the Lincoln Community Health Center, a historically black community hospital in Durham, to assume responsibility. Nichols then took a job at Lincoln, and remained there until her retirement in 1995. During those 20 years, Joyce served as a faculty member in the PA Program at Duke, teaching physical diagnosis, and precepting hundreds of medical and physician assistant students.

Having joined the newly formed American Academy of Physician Assistants as a student, she was soon elected to the Board of Directors, becoming the first minority to do so. Her advocacy led to the formation of a Minority Affairs Committee which she chaired for several years, establishing herself as the acknowledged “matriarch” of the Committee, and leader regarding issues affecting women and minorities within the Academy over the next 20 years. Joyce helped found, and served on, the Board of the North Carolina Academy



Joyce Nichols

of Physician Assistants. She became a Commissioner on the Durham Housing Authority, a member of the Board of Directors of the Durham Hospital Corporation and a board member of the Lincoln Community Health Center.

For her advocacy regarding the poor and the disadvantaged, Joyce received the prestigious Nancy Susan Reynolds Award in 1991, and was named the AAPA Paragon “Humanitarian of the Year” in 1995. She was inducted into the Duke University PA Alumni Hall of Fame in 2002.

Two months prior to her death, Joyce was interviewed by John Davis, PA-C, and Earl Echard, PA-C, her closest colleagues on the Minority Affairs Committee. Davis says that Nichols deserves credit for making changes in the profession that she often credits to others. The videotape has been transcribed, and is available by contacting the Society. We have lost a legend in the history of the physician assistant profession, whose lifelong work on behalf of health care, housing and education for the poor will endure. Fortunately, future generations

will have the opportunity to see and hear her recollections.

** *J. Strand de Oliveira. Leadership case study: Joyce Ann Nichols; JAAPA: 25 (11), November, 2012.*

NCCPA Certifies 100,000th PA

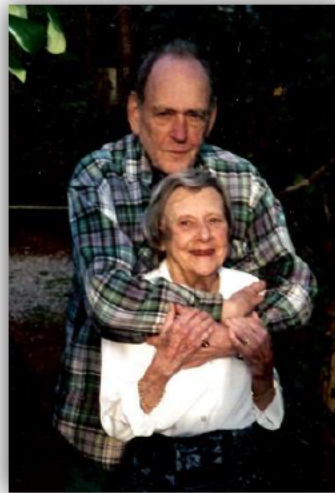
The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) reached a milestone this year when it issued the 100,000th certificate since its founding nearly 40 years ago. The recipient, Polina Burt, PA-C, attended the Physician Assistant Studies Program at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., graduating in May, 2012, with a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies. Ms. Burt is currently employed at City Central Dermatology in Brooklyn and Queens, N.Y.

“I love my job – every day is something new,” said Burt. “Anyone who is looking for a medical career that provides you stability, and an opportunity to solve problems, and to care for and educate patients, should consider being a PA. It’s very rewarding.”

The first certifying examinations were created and administered by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) in 1973 and 1974. The NBME itself determined eligibility and the standard for passing the examination. The NCCPA, a consortium of 14 major national medical organizations, was created in August, 1974 to assume the roles of eligibility and standard setting, and administration of subsequent examinations, which continued to be developed by the NBME. The NCCPA issued its first certificates in 1975 to those who had passed the first two examinations. Certification by the NCCPA quickly became the universally recognized precondition for practice in all 50 states. The PA-C credential is awarded by NCCPA to PAs who fulfill certification, certification maintenance and recertification requirements. There are more than 90,000 actively certified PAs in the U.S. today.

Taking Care of Priorities Reginald D. Carter, PhD, PA

I remember Dr. Stead saying to our students one time to “make the most of each day, learn something new, work hard and at the end of the day, go home and enjoy your spouse.” As busy professionals, with many demands, we need to learn how to balance our priorities as did Dr. Stead.



Dr. Stead and his wife, Evelyn

It was PA Day, October 6, 2001, a time to celebrate the day that the first formally trained physician assistants graduated from Duke University in 1967. It also happened to be Dr. Stead’s 93rd birthday. As I pulled up to the entrance of the Washington Duke Inn, Dr. Stead and Evelyn were at the door waiting to be escorted to the Searle Center to help celebrate the program and profession that he helped establish.

After the exchange of warm greetings, I open the doors to our van and Evelyn leaped into the back seat even though she had recently recovered from a fractured hip. I helped Dr. Stead to the front passenger seat, closed the door, walked around the front of the van and got in to drive. I looked at Dr. Stead as we were about to drive away and apologized for driving a van which set high off the ground and took some effort to get into. He looked at me and said that his son-in-law had one of those SUVs, a Cherokee or something, and he kindly liked it. To my surprise and thinking of his and Evelyn’s ages, I said “why?” Without hesitation he said, “Well you see, when Mrs. Stead has to get into one of those cars, she has to hike up her dress to get in and I get a chance to see a little leg.”

I looked in the rearview mirror and Mrs. Stead was shaking her head, but with a smile on her face. I thought to myself. He is 93 today, and been married for I don’t know how long, and he is still flirting with his wife.

Dr. Carter is the former Chief and Program Director of the Physician Assistant Education Division, Department of Community and Family Medicine, Duke University. He is also the Historian Emeritus of the PA History Society. Photograph donated by Janna Burton and George Stevenson to the Physician Assistant History Society. Photograph was taken at the Stead’s Lake Home in 2002. Mrs. Stead died in 2003 and Dr. Stead in 2005.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicted that the PA profession will grow by 39 percent, and be the second fastest growing health occupation between 2008 and 2018. *Forbes* magazine ranked PAs first on its list of “best master’s degrees” for job opportunities and income potential. *Money Magazine* ranked PAs as number two on its “best jobs in America” list. *U.S. News and World Report* ranked the PA profession as one of the “50 best careers” of 2011.

According to the Accreditation Review Commission on Physician Assistant Education (ARC-PA), the profession’s accreditation authority, the number of accredited PA programs has increased from 54 in 1991 to 170 today, and is poised to continue to grow significantly with more than 50 new programs in the process of recognition for accreditation by the end of 2015.

“Pressures on the health care delivery system are growing, but physician-PA teams are bridging gaps in health care for patients in communities throughout the United States.” said Patricia A. Cook, MD, FACP, 2012 Chair of the NCCPA Board of Directors.

Adapted from an [NCCPA News Release](#), October, 2012.

Donations Requested

The *Physician Assistant History Society* is a charitable organization that exists for educational purposes, and is exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

While the Society receives generous basic support from our parent organization, the NCCPA, it is reliant upon grants that might be received, but most especially upon donations from organizations like yours, and people like you. The new initiatives and programs, like student mentoring, student prizes and support for celebrations of anniversary events can only be sustained with contributions from the entire PA community. If we sound like the appeals that you hear quarterly from public television and radio, the situation is quite analogous. \$25, \$10, \$5 – every bit helps when multiplied by the rapidly growing population of practicing PAs.

Individuals can contribute by check, money order, credit card or through PayPal. Please [visit our Web site to make a donation](#).

This is your History Society! This is your history! Please help to make 2013 the most successful donation year ever.



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