

PA HISTORY ... APAP's Ghost

BY PAM MOYERS SCOTT, MPAS, PA-C

This isn't Casper, the Friendly Ghost, but rather a button advertising the Association of Physician Assistant Programs' Central Application Service for Physician Assistants, or CASPA.

A task force chaired by Elaine Grant, PA-C, MPH, was appointed by the APAP board of directors in 1996 to determine the feasibility of establishing a central application service for PA programs. A survey conducted in 1997 showed that 58% of responding programs would participate if such a venture were available.

Based on these findings, the task force was asked to develop a request for proposal to send to various vendors who might be interested in providing the service.¹ The American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine was selected to work with the task force to establish the online service to applicants. After being beta-tested, CASPA became operational in 2001.

CASPA is referred to as the "friendly service" for students, because they can make applications to numerous participating PA programs without completing a separate application for each program. It is also a single source for students to see the prerequisites of each program, whether a supplemental application is required, what standardized testing each program requires (if any) and what the application deadline is.

It is also a "friendly service" for PA programs, because it saves them tremendous time and effort, not only in collecting the potential students' application information, but also in verifying and recording available standardized test scores, transcripts and references available on each student. This is all accomplished before the applications are forwarded to the PA programs selected by the applicant for admission.

If all programs were to participate, CASPA would be a "friendly service" for PAs and other researchers interested in applicant trends. It would provide demographic, academic and experiential data to the PA community, much like the American Medical College's Application Service does for physicians. Ninety-six of the 134 programs now participate. This is up significantly from the first year of operation in 2001, when there was approximately a 50% participation rate. □

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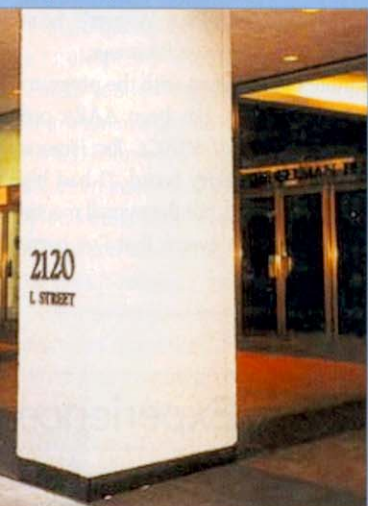


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PA HISTORY ... What Is This Building?

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Suite 210 of the Gelman Building, located at 2120 L Street in Washington, was the first permanent location for the combined offices of the Association of Physicians' Assistant Programs (APAP) and the American Academy of Physicians' Assistants (the organizations' names at the time contained an apostrophe and an S).



The office opened on May 24, 1974, with three full-time staff members: executive director Donald Fisher, PhD, executive assistant Marty Wilson and administrative assistant Ruth A. Hoepfer. Deny Radefeld, who worked for the George Washington University, was hired as a part-time controller and played an important role in helping secure space for the national office. Mary Hunton was employed as a temporary receptionist and typist.¹

Drs. Alfred M. Sadler and Thomas Piemme, president and president-elect of APAP, were instrumental in securing funds to establish the national office. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the van Ameringen Foundation and the Littleton Foundation contributed a total of \$195,000. As an IRS-designated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, APAP was eligible for foundation funding. The AAPA could not administer the funding jointly as first intended, since the

IRS had denied its eligibility as a 501(c)(3) organization.²

A combined APAP and AAPA executive director search team recommended Dr. Fisher from the University of Mississippi for the joint position. He was offered the position in November and moved to Washington in the spring to establish the office. The George Washington University provided temporary office space in the ambulatory care center at 2150 Pennsylvania Avenue until new space became available in the Gelman Building.

Dr. Fisher said in 1974, "We opened the doors to begin the unbelievable task of centralization and organization that will serve the best interest of all concerned with the physicians' assistant concept."¹

The priorities undertaken by the two organizations at that time included legislative activities, establishing a National Employment Listing Service, conducting research on graduates and student PAs and compiling a centralized resource center and library within the facility.¹


In 1976, APAP received an additional grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to underwrite salaries and associated costs for maintaining the combined APAP-AAPA national office for three years. These funds also enabled the national office staff to establish a research center to collect demographic and clinical profile data on PAs. The first survey revealed that 83% of the nearly 5,000 PAs at that time were in primary care settings.³

After two years in the Gelman Building, the combined offices moved to 2341 Jefferson Davis Highway in Arlington, Va., and remained there until 1982, when they moved to 1117 19th Street in Arlington. There they remained until the AAPA completed construction on its current building in 1987 located at 950 North Washington Street in Alexandria, Va. □

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PA HISTORY ... What Is This Button?

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PA and non-PA educators alike are proud to be part of the PA profession. In the formative years, PA educators were drawn from a variety of professions, including medicine, nursing, allied health, social work and the basic medical sciences. According to the first annual report of PA programs, released in 1985, less than one-half of the programs' personnel were PAs, who at that time primarily were associated with the clinical component of the curriculum.¹

Today most program personnel are PAs, with 86% of all program directors being PAs.² The high professional retention rate and job satisfaction of PAs attest to PA program educators' abilities to select and educate highly qualified individuals.

As PA programs began reaching significant milestones in their development, such as their 20th or 25th anniversaries, they wanted to let others know about their achievements and their pride in the role they played in the PA profession's development. As the PA profession continued to grow and prosper, many PA programs began producing buttons and other memorabilia commemorating the anniversary of the opening of their program or the commencement of their first graduates.

Some schools created very professional, serious items, whereas others, such as the Wake Forest University School of Medicine PA Program, created humorous ones (like the one pictured here). The cartoon professor depicted on this button was featured in a series of self-instructional texts titled *Introduction to Medical Sciences for Clinical Practice*, created by the Wake Forest PA Program faculty under the direction of Dr. Katherine H. Anderson and published by Year Book Medical in 1976.

This button was created in 1988 to mark the 20th anniversary of the opening of the PA program. Notice that the button says "Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Wake Forest University." When the Wake Forest Medical School of Medicine was expanded to a four-year institution and moved from Wake County, N.C., to Winston-Salem, N.C., it was renamed Bowman Gray School of Medicine to recognize the memory of the benefactor who made the expansion possible. In 1997, the Bowman Gray School of Medicine was renamed Wake Forest University School of Medicine, located on the Bowman Gray Campus. □

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