

Editorial

Brief History of the American Pancreatic Association

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In 1969, when the Federated Societies for Experimental Biology and the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) were flourishing with well-attended meetings too large for close discussion, investigators who longed to share their research in cellular pancreatic function and metabolism found themselves without a vehicle of communication. Thus, the body that would become known as the American Pancreatic Association was born, its founding fathers sharing a common vision to provide a scientific forum in which investigators could present and exchange knowledge of pancreatic diseases and research. With Dr. Frank Brooks' expertise in classic physiology, Dr. Vay Liang W. Go's interest in gastrointestinal hormones, and Dr. Paul Webster's focus on cellular pancreatic function, it was agreed that an annual meeting was needed to facilitate communication between researchers.

The original purpose and membership statement to "foster clinical and basic research in clinical disease," and the specific intent to "sponsor an annual meeting at which unpublished research could be presented and discussed" became the foundation upon which the American Pancreatic Association was created, where investigators would be able to present their work to a critical and somewhat more intimate audience.

Recognition of the need for a scientific forum focusing on the pancreas prompted Dr. Brooks, Dr. Webster, and Dr. Go to develop an organization that would serve individuals interested in basic and clinical research of pancreatic function and disease.

With an evolving title—first the Canadian/American Pancreatic Society Group, then the American Pancreatic Study Group, and finally the American Pancreatic Association (APA), a name Dr. Go proposed in 1977—the organization held its first meetings from 1969 to 1974 at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. Scheduling conflicts with other meetings, excessive expenses, and unsuitable environments prompted several relocations around Chicago: the Continental Plaza Hotel (now the Westin), the Knickerbocker Hotel, and eventually the Ambassador West Hotel were all meeting sites of the young APA. From 1977 to 2001, the budding APA convened at the Ambassador West, and the annual meeting in November 2002 marked the inauguration of a new site, the Westin Chicago River North Hotel.

The initial meetings of the APA were quite informal (1) with written agendas beginning in 1971. Investigators from

around the country participated in a 1-day program that consisted of 8-minute presentations followed by 5-minute discussions. The Executive Committee of the 1972 meeting included Frank Brooks, Bill Go, Jacques Dunnigan, and Roy Preshaw. The Advisory Committee was composed of James Jamieson, Pat Fitzgerald, David Dreiling, Bill Silen, Henry Janowitz, B.J. Haverback, and M.C. Anderson.

The National Cancer Institute's "War on Cancer," initiated by President Nixon, greatly benefited pancreatic research because one of its first programs, The National Pancreatic Cancer Project, began contributing funds to the APA annual meetings in November 1976. These funds continued through 1985. On December 9, 1976, the APA was established as a nonprofit corporation under Pennsylvania state law. Dr. Webster served as Executive Secretary/Treasurer from 1969 to 1976, and Dr. Brooks followed suit from 1976 to 1981, before handing the baton to Dr. Go in 1981. Dr. Go served until 1985, when Dr. Howard Reber was elected to office. Dr. Howard Reber continues to govern the APA as Executive Secretary/Treasurer.

The APA and its sister foundation, the Japan Pancreas Society (JPS), were both established with the intent to provide opportunities for scientists and physicians to present and exchange knowledge in the progress of pancreatic research and the management of disease. In 1986, Dr. Go led the APA in developing the journal *Pancreas*, which was envisioned to extend the goals of both the APA and JPS to a literary realm, involving expert pancreatic researchers and physicians in peer review and publication to further share resources and knowledge. With Dr. Go as the founding Editor-in-Chief, *Pancreas*, the official journal of the APA, has continued to attract an international audience with its focus on basic and clinical research, and has recently expanded its reach to include the electronic; *Pancreas* E-articles first appeared online in July 2002. The journal is listed in various indices, has a respectable impact factor, and seeks to continually expand the number of subscribers from the members of the JPS and APA to clinicians and academicians worldwide.

A now-mature APA boasts an international body of 345 individuals, including institutional memberships. Ongoing since 1991 are the Frank Brooks Memorial State-of-the-Art Lectures in basic sciences, pancreatitis, and pancreatic cancer that are held commensurate with each annual APA meeting. This honorary lectureship was established in No-

vember 1991 under the presidency of Dr. Phillip P. Toskes. Dr. Guido Adler presented the first lecture in basic sciences in November of the following year. And in 2001, the Vay Liang and Frisca Go Pancreas Achievement Award was established "in recognition of lifetime contributions in pancreatology." Indeed, the APA strives to uphold its original purpose of fostering communication around the pancreas and continues to thrive on constant membership growth, fortified shared resources, and scientific progress into the 21st century.

PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE AMERICAN PANCREATIC ASSOCIATION

2002 Jill Palmer Smith (Present)
 2001 Edward L Bradley, III
 2000 William Y. Chey
 1999 Peter A. Banks
 1998 Murray Korc
 1997 William Steinberg
 1996 Michael L. Steer
 1995 James H. Grendell
 1994 Courtney M. Townsend, Jr.

1993 Travis Solomon
 1992 Phillip P. Toskes
 1991 James D. Jamison
 1990 Vay Liang W. Go
 1989 Daniel Longnecker
 1988 Michael Levitt
 1987 John Williams
 1986 Eugene P. DiMagno
 1985 Howard A. Reber
 1984 George Scheele
 1983 Jerry Gardner
 1982 Frank Brooks
 1981 Frank G. Moody
 1980 Vay Liang W. Go
 1979 Paul Webster
 1978 Frank Brooks

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REFERENCE

1. Webster PD. Editorial: Reflections on early meetings of the American Pancreatic Association. *Pancreas* 1995;11:321-323.