

Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the PA History Society



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Message from the President

Richard C. Vause, Jr., DHSc, MPAS, PA-C, FCPP, DFAAPA, CAPT. USPHS (retired)



Here we are in 2025, one quarter of the way through our new century. This year we celebrate 23 years of the PA History Society, and it is going to be a productive one. Immediate Past President [Robert Smith](#)'s year was programmatically intense, and we want to carry that intensity into the new year. I welcome our new President-Elect [William Kohlhepp](#) and Secretary-Treasurer [Robin Hunter-Buskey](#) to the leadership team and I will be relying heavily on the support of the executive committee and all the

Trustees to make this year a success. I would also like to welcome our new Trustees, Jeff Myers, MPH, MMSc, PA-C, DFAAPA, Phoebe Zhang, PA-S2, (our Student Member), and the NCCPA appointed Trustee, Jed Grant, DMSc, PA-C. We look forward to their contributions on the Society's Board.

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PAHx Welcomes Three New Trustees in 2025

In January, the PAHx Board of Trustees welcomed three new board members during our annual board orientation meeting:

Trustee Jed Grant, DMSc, PA-C, Trustee Jeff Myers, MPH, MMSc, PA-C, DFAAPA, and our Student Trustee Phoebe Zhang, PA-S2. Grant was appointed by the NCCPA Board of Directors to serve concurrently on both the NCCPA and PAHx boards during his tenure. Myers and Zhang are generally elected Trustees.

Trustee Grant comes to the Society board with over 24 years of clinical experience in primary care, urgent care, emergency medicine, and PA education. He

currently serves as the founding program director at Chamberlain University in Phoenix, AZ.

Grant began his medical career as a U.S. Army medic and graduated from the Interservice PA Program. He is an active member of the Army National Guard Reserves.



Jed Grant, DMSc, PA-C

(Continued on Page 2)

(President's Message continued from page 1)

The PAHx has several major projects set for this year. First, we began a deep dive into our Bylaws to ensure they remain relevant and well aligned with the Society's goals and objectives. We will also be making inroads into the regionalization plan initiated under Dr. Smith's presidency. We will start reaching out to the state organizations to identify those groups that would like the Society's assistance in capturing their history. Relying on the experience of our historian, Tricia Marriott, and our senior archivist, Michelle Schabowski, we hope to be able to assist those organizations who are interested in identifying and preserving their history.

We are in the process of revising our educational learning modules. Our goal is to have a set of 7 modules completed by this fall to roll-out to educators during the PAEA Forum in San Diego. These modules are being developed to align with the learning styles of today's PA students. They will be interactive, concise, and informative, with a quiz at the end of each module. Upon completion, students will receive a digital certificate to give to their program faculty member to gain credit for learning the history of the PA profession, as required by the ARC-PA.

I invite everyone to visit at our [website](#) which is updated regularly with new exhibits and historical information. For anyone interested in the history that has been made, and the history PAs continue to make today, our website is loaded with features that are relevant to PA students, PAs, historians, researchers, and everyone interested in learning about the PA profession.

I invite all PAs to consider becoming a [Friend of the Society](#) and PA programs and PA organizations to become [PAHx Associates](#) of the PA History Society. One of the many benefits to programs will be the availability of the educational learning modules through a new learning management system.

Finally, a shout out to our fantastic PAHx staff, the Society could not do this work without your phenomenal hard work and assistance.

(Meet New Trustees continued from page 1)



Jeff Myers, MPH,
MMSc, PA-C, DFAAPA

Trustee Myers has over two decades of experience in family and internal medicine, urgent care, and PA education. He currently serves as assistant professor and inpatient clinical director at Oregon Health Science University PA program. In addition, Myers is a member of the inpatient palliative care service at OSU.

Student Trustee Zhang is in her second year at Long Island University and is currently in her clinical rotations. She is the founder/writer of howmedworks.com, a website dedicated to improving healthcare literacy.



Phoebe Zhang, PA-S2

The PAHx Board is looking forward to working with these new Trustees on a variety of projects this year!

"Any disease process always ends up being more complicated than one thinks."

Dr. Eugene A. Stead

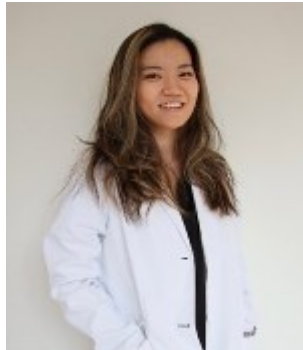
This is just one quote in the collection of over 342 thoughts and sayings from Dr. Stead, founder of the PA profession, which is featured in the Society's little blue booklet titled ***Just Say for Me***, that you can find on the Society's website here: <https://pahx.org/pa-history-book/>

In Her Own Words: Phoebe Zhang, PA-S2, PAHx Student Trustee

By Bruna Varalli-Claypool, BBA, MHS, PA-C, DFAAPA, PAHx Trustee

Why did you choose the PA Profession? Or did it choose you?

I like to think it was both. I always knew I'd end up in medicine, but the big decision was which path to take. I considered medical school, PA school, and bioengineering.



As I gained more experience, I realized the PA role was exactly what I wanted. In every specialty I worked in, I saw PAs building strong relationships with patients and developing treatment plans on their own—something I initially thought was limited to physicians.

The application process was stressful, especially since I decided on PA school later in the cycle. I knew my odds weren't the best, as I was balancing last-minute prerequisites, the CASPA application, and work, all while also knowing that my GPA was borderline at best due to a tough period in college. After several rejections, I applied to some bioengineering programs as a backup and even got into some top schools on scholarships. However, after a lot of careful thought, I decided to turn down the acceptances and commit to pursuing PA school, even if it meant needing to reapply the following year. It felt like I had made the right decision when, just a couple of days later, I received my first PA school acceptance letter.

If you could have a superpower, what would it be and why?

If I could have a superpower, it would be the ability to fly. I feel like it would be so much fun, not to mention a really convenient way to get around.

You went to undergrad in San Diego. How did you get to PA school at Long Island University?

Even though I wanted to stay on the West Coast, I quickly realized that my background and goals were better aligned with East Coast programs, as they were generally more flexible in terms of career path expectations after graduation. Despite being involved in many volunteer efforts to help underserved populations, most of my actual clinical experience was in specialties, which was less preferred by West Coast PA programs. I was also looking for a program that would allow me to explore a variety of specialties before narrowing my career focus. Additionally, New York City, specifically, is home to numerous world-renowned medical centers, where PAs work in nearly every specialty. I was eager to train in these environments and learn from professionals at the forefronts of their fields to ensure that I would be well-prepared to practice in any setting.

Tell us about "Project Happiness." What did it teach you about yourself that you didn't know before getting involved in this project?

Project Happiness was a student organization I joined in undergrad, in which we organized events for hospitalized children receiving long-term care at Rady Children's Hospital. Spending time with the children and their families there twice every month was incredibly rewarding. We came up with lots of fun activities like themed arts and crafts (e.g. decorating Halloween cookies for the holiday and painting succulent pots for spring). This experience showed me how small moments of connection and joy can make such a large difference in someone's day.

It also taught me how important non-medical volunteer work is in hospitals, as it brings a sense of warmth and humanity to an often challenging and isolating environment.

(Continued on Page 4)

(In Her Own Words continued from page 3)

When you write your first book, what will the title be?

My first book will be titled *Pass the PANCE with Phoebe!* I'm very passionate about helping other PA students succeed.



LIU PA Program Class of 2025 at PAs on the Plaza, Oct 11, 2024

In my spare time, I like to create articles and videos sharing tips and strategies for excelling in PA school. Additionally, throughout both didactic and clinical years, I've shared the study guides that I've made for PA school exams with my classmates, and they've all found them incredibly helpful for cutting

down studying time while still covering essential material. I

feel like many topics are made unnecessarily harder than they need to be so I'm excited to combine all of these resources into a book later to help support future PA students on their journeys.

How many languages do you speak?

I speak two languages: English and Mandarin. Both of my parents spoke Mandarin in our home when I was growing up and I attended Chinese school for about eight years. I did take six years of French classes, but can only just get by conversationally so I'm not going to count that.

What advice do you wish someone would have given you before you started PA school?

One piece of advice I wish someone had given me before starting PA school is to advocate for

yourself, whether it's in school, on rotations, or elsewhere. It's easy to fall into the mindset of thinking you're "just a PA student," but it's important to remember that your voice matters. Speaking up for your needs, asking questions, and seeking support when necessary helps you grow both personally and professionally. Taking ownership of your experience can make a big difference in your success and well-being. It might feel a bit uncomfortable at first, but you'll be amazed at how far you can go and what you can achieve.

Where will your first post-PA school vacation be? Why?

My first vacation after PA school will be to Hawaii. My partner is originally from there, and we were actually living in Hawaii just before I started PA school. Although we both live in New York currently, we make sure to go back and visit whenever possible to see family and friends. I absolutely love it there and plan to eventually move back to practice. Plus, one of my friends, who also happens to be a PA, is getting married in Hawaii right after I graduate, so I'm excited to go back for her wedding!

Zhang accepting NYSSPA PA Student Scholarship, Nov 2024



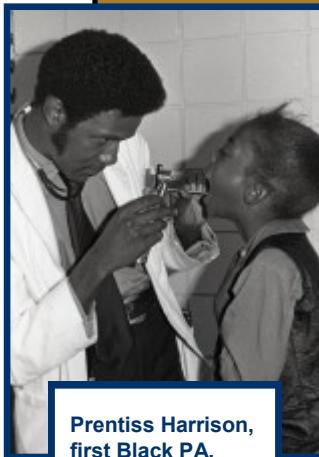
Are you looking for a Presenter on PA History?

Don't forget to include the interesting history of our profession at your next PA celebration! One of the Society's benefits for our **annual PAHx Associates** is access to our **Speakers Bureau**. Our Trustees and PA Historians are experienced PA presenters who would be honored to speak at your next event virtually, or in person at nearby locations. The PAHx does not have a budget to cover speaker travel expenses, so our speakers are only available to travel within an appropriate driving distance from their home to the presentation.

You can learn more about the PA History Society Board of Trustees and our Historian from our website: <https://pahx.org/who-are-we/>.

PAHx Associates are asked to send your questions and/or speaker bureau inquiry via email to our office at: Contactus@pahx.org. Please include the following information in your request:

- Event Contact Person Name, Email and Phone Number
- Date, Time, and Location of your event
- Number of expected Guests, Students and/or Audience
- Amount of Time Requested for the PAHx Presentation



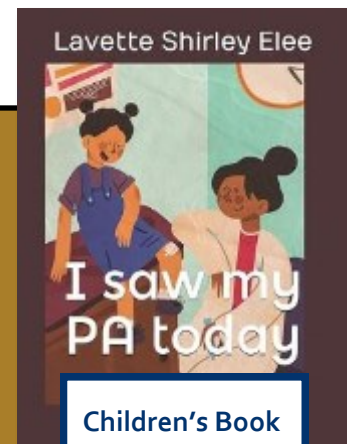
Prentiss Harrison, first Black PA, circa 1970

The PA History Society invites you to discover the often-overlooked stories of the PA profession. During Black History Month, the PAHx is spotlighting African American PAs who made significant contributions to the profession.

On our website, you can [watch, listen, and read](#) the stories from some of these PAs and the changes they've made to healthcare and the profession.

Please also explore our [Oral History](#) and [Biography](#) webpages for more interesting stories!

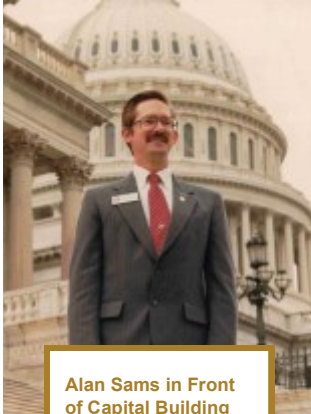
If you would like to suggest that we recognize someone through an interview or a bio, please email us at: contactus@pahx.org.



Children's Book by PA author

From the Archives: The Alan Sams Collection

By Michelle Schabowski, MSIS, CA,
PAHx Sr. Archivist



Alan Sams in Front of Capital Building for CCOW, 1990

In December 2024, the PA History Society processed its last collection of the year: The Alan Sams Collection!

Alan Sams, PA, DFAAPA, is a Georgia resident and was able to drop off his collection personally to the archives. He was the first president of the Georgia Association of PAs and an early leader in the AAPA.

Sams served on the board of directors for the Georgia

Society of Allied Health Professions, he was the first PA liaison to the Georgia State Board of Medical Examiners and worked as the representative of the profession to their PA Advisory Committee.

On the national front, Sams worked on many AAPA committees and served on their board of directors (1973–1975). As chair of the elections committee, he helped install the guidelines for the formation of the House of Delegates. After his board service and his time on the elections committee, Sams worked as chair of the AAPA’s professional practice and relations committee, creating ties with other national medical, prescriptive, and membership organizations. If you would like to learn more about the many contributions Sams has made to the PA profession, please read his biography featured [on our website](#).

The Alan Sams Collection contains correspondence, reference material, board and committee meeting minutes, board books, policy manuals and photographs. The materials focus on Sams’s time on the board of the Georgia Association of PAs, his role as the PA representative to the Georgia State Board of Medical Examiners, and his role as chair of the Ethics Committee of the AAPA.

You may view the photographs of the Sams collection [by clicking here](#).

To search the finding aid of the collection, please [click here](#). You may request more information on or the digitization of materials (for research and/or educational purposes) by clicking on a folder name and then on the “Send Us Feedback” button in the top right hand corner of the catalog.



Alan Sams Meeting US Representative John Lewis for CCOW, 1990

PA Profession Continues to Rank on Top of Best Jobs in the U.S.!

By Greg Thomas, PA-C Emeritus, MPH, DFAAPA
PAHx Board of Trustees



Once again, the PA profession was listed as one of the best jobs in the country according to the latest [U.S. News and World Report](#) rankings released on January 14, 2025. PAs ranked number three in overall jobs, an increase from PAs’ position at number

five in the 2024 rankings. In addition, PAs came in second as the best healthcare job and third as the best STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) job.

According to *U.S. News and World Report*, jobs are ranked based on their overall score, which combines multiple components into a single weighted average score between 0 and 10

(Continued on Page 7)

(Top Best Jobs Continued from Page 6)

(the PA profession received an overall score of 7.2 in the 2025 analysis). The components determining the metrics are: Future prospects (30%); wage potential (25%); employment (20%); job safety and stability (15%) and work-life balance (10%).

The data *U.S. News and World Report* gathered for each metric comes from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which also projects a 28.5% employment growth for PAs between 2023 and 2033. In that period, an estimated 43,700 jobs should be created.



Since 2018, PAs have been ranked within the top 5 overall best professions. In 2021, the profession achieved the number one ranking as the best job overall and the best healthcare job. To learn more about the PA profession and its history, visit the [PAHx website here](#).

Don't forget to check out the [Society's website](#) regularly for 'all things PA history', including:

- * **375 inspiring biographies**
- * **257 oral history interviews**
- * **179 videos**
- * **2,500 photographs**
- * **and much more!**



March is Women's History Month!

The National Women's History Alliance selects and publishes a yearly theme. The theme for Women's History Month 2025 is ***"Moving Forward Together! Women Educating & Inspiring Generations."***



Each year, the PAHx celebrates the important contributions made by women PAs throughout the profession. **Please visit the PAHx website in March** to view the Society's annual feature and to learn about some of the women PAs who have made a difference during the PA profession's exceptional 58 year history!

The history of Women's Month in the United States began as a local celebration for one week by the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County [California] Commission on the Status of Women in 1978. At the urging of a consortium of women's group and historians, led by the National Women's History Project [now the National Women's History Alliance] for national recognition, in February 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8, 1980, as National Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress passed a Public Law designating March as "Women's History Month" and subsequent resolutions followed each year. Since 1995, each U.S. president has issued an annual proclamation designating the month of March as "Women's History Month".¹

¹ *National Women's History Museum website accessed 2.7.25, <https://www.womenshistory.org/womens-history/womens-history-month#> for the content regarding the history of Women's History Month.*

Searching our Biography page just got easier!

With over 350 biographies, we know sometimes it can be overwhelming to search and browse our BIO list for specific topics that our users might be interested in.

The PA History Society has updated our website to make it possible to search our entire [bio collection](#) by topics!

Biography Highlights



ROBERT LEE WOOTEN, JR., PA-C

[Learn more →](#)



TRISHA MICHELLE HARRIS, MS, PA-C

[Learn more →](#)

Search Words

- Reset
- AAPA Executive Directors
- AAPA Presidents
- AAPA Staff Members
- Addiction Medicine
- African Heritage Caucus Presidents**
- Alabama Society of PAs Presidents
- American Association of Surgical PAs Presidents
- ARC-PA Chairs
- ARC-PA Executive Directors
- ARC-PA Staff Members
- Arizona State Association of PAs Presidents
- Army
- Association of Neurosurgical PAs Presidents

On the biography page, look at the right side menu titled “Search Words” in the gray box. Scroll through the key phrases we’ve selected and click on one that piques your interest. For example, if you click on “African Heritage Caucus Presidents” all the biographies that we have in our collection that are “tagged” with that phrase will display at the top of the webpage.

Don’t see a search phrase or word that you believe should be on the list? If you would like to suggest a biography that isn’t in our collection, please [email us!](#)

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ConnAPA Celebrates 50 Years

By *Tricia Marriott, MPAS, MJ,CHC, PA-C, DFAAPA*
PAHx Historian (and ConnAPA member)



The Connecticut Academy of Physician Associates (ConnAPA) will be celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout the year. As a way to recognize the hard work, leadership and commitment over the past 50 years, the celebration will begin with its 38th Annual Charter Oak Conference March 23-25, 2025, the Annual Membership Meeting in June 2025, and at its 3rd Annual Golf Outing in September 2025.

ConnAPA History

Five decades ago, a small group of PAs, including Chris Barber, [Burdeen Camp](#), [Bruce Fichandler](#), Ron Fox, [Elaine Grant](#), [Jeff Heinrich](#), and [Charlie Park](#), met in New Haven to establish what eventually would become the Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants. That small group included some very important individuals who, by all accounts made significant contributions to the PA profession. A quick review of the PA History Society and ConnAPA websites revealed extensive biographies on many of those ConnAPA founding pioneers who were instrumental in advocating for PAs that extended far beyond the state's borders.

These pioneering PAs set a high standard for future ConnAPA leaders, who continue to contribute to the profession at the national level. Jason Prevelige is currently serving as the AAPA president, one of many ConnAPA leaders who have served in this role. You can read about Prevelige and several other former

ConnAPA Presidents who have impacted the profession in a variety of ways:

- ◆ [William "Bill" Kohlhepp](#)
- ◆ [Cynthia "Cindy" Booth Lord](#)
- ◆ [Patricia "Tricia" Marriott](#)
- ◆ [Jason Prevelige](#)
- ◆ [Shepard B. Stone](#)
- ◆ [Joseph Varano](#)
- ◆ [Mary Warner](#)

ConnAPA was officially incorporated in 1977 and subsequently recognized as a Constituent Organization of the AAPA in 1977. Charlie Park, a 1974 graduate of the Yale Physician Associate Program, served as ConnAPA's first President. Fittingly, Park was the first PA granted a Connecticut license when the Department of Public Health began licensing PAs in 1993. He continues to hold this Connecticut PA license numbered 00001.



Park accepting his Connecticut License
 (Courtesy of ConnAPA)

The PA profession in Connecticut started in 1970 at the Yale School of Medicine's Physician Associate Program. The first Yale PA class matriculated in 1971 and graduated its first 5 students in 1973. Meanwhile, the 1971 Amendment to the Connecticut Medical Practice Act allowed "trained assistants" to work under the

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Newsletter Editor

Debra S. Munsell, DHSc, PA-C, DFAAPA
Email: munsell_d@lynchburg.edu

Historian

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(ConnAPA Celebrating 50 Continued from Page 9)

supervision of a licensed physician. It was under this provision that PAs initially were allowed to practice. Due to ConnAPA's legislative efforts, in 1980 the PA profession was officially defined in statute [Chapter 370-who may practice Medicine and Surgery] when CT Public Act 80-362 was passed. In 1991, [Public Act 90-211](#) licensing PAs and affording them prescriptive authority, including controlled substances, became effective.

Over the next two decades, ConnAPA's legislative team worked hard to improve PA practice, including but not limited to passing [Public Act 18-168](#) eliminating physician-PA ratio in 2018 and in 2021 adding PAs to 77 sections of statute when [Public Act 21-196](#) was signed into law. ConnAPA continues to advocate for the PA profession in 2025 with the introduction of [HB 6835 An Act Adopting the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact](#) in the current legislative session.

If your State Chapter or PA Program is celebrating its golden anniversary and you would like to draft a short article for the PAHx's *Historical Happenings* newsletter, please email ContactUs@pahx.org. Also, send us your organization's anniversary website link to be featured on the Society's [Celebrating 50](#) webpage!

Stay in Touch with PAHx thru Social Media!

Please be sure to follow the PA History Society on [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#) to receive updates on all things PA history!





Host this professional PA exhibit at your next event!
“Physician Assistants: Collaboration and Care”



PAHx-NLM Traveling Banner Exhibition

- In 2017, the PA History Society and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) teamed up to complete a special banner exhibition promoting the PA profession.
- Each of the six banners measure 7' high and 3' wide and requires approximately 20 feet of floor space to be displayed.
- The complete banner set and hardware is shipped in one large wheeled 48"H x 19"W X 19"D container weighing 70 lbs.
- PAHx Associates can host the banner exhibition for a total of 4 weeks at their location. Associates will incur a *one-way* FedEx 2-day Ground shipping cost.
- Non-PAHx Associates may also host the banner exhibition for 4 weeks, but are required to cover *round trip* FedEx 2-day Ground shipping costs.
- Federal Express 2-day Ground shipping is estimated at \$200-\$400 each way.
- Please contact the PA History Society office for further information or to reserve this professional exhibit for your next special event.

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