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This is the annual awards issue for the Texas Psychologist. Were you at convention? (If not, you missed out on a terrific program; pencil in Nov. 10-12 for our next meeting in Austin!) We honored a number of stellar colleagues at our big luncheon and we’ve recounted those awards here.

The convention was very exciting this year, with many excellent presentations and lots of networking with old friends and new. One of the developments at convention is the rotation of the leadership at TPA. Greg Simonsen has now assumed the presidency, with James Bray moving to the past presidency, Carol Grothues becoming president-elect and Cheryl Hall assuming the role of president-elect designate. Michael Flynn, Alfonso Mercado, and Charles Walker are our new members on the Board of Trustees. Additionally, Rick McGraw has left his position as TPA’s representative to APA Council of Representatives to assume his new role on APA’s Board of Directors. Rick will be replaced by, uh, me.

I’m looking forward to serving on the Council of Representatives, but it is going to be a lot of work. Thus, I am stepping aside as the editor of the Texas Psychologist. (Geeze, he’s finally leaving.) As I depart, I’d like to recap my tenure. Over the past 15 years, the Texas Psychologist has had some ups and downs due to changing financial pressures. The Summer issue of 2005 resumed hard copy publication after general disappointment with our foray into an electronic format. Since then it has been published on a regular basis. Except during the period when I was president of TPA, I have been involved with the Texas Psychologist for a decade. (Again, geeze.) I’ve tried to shape the Texas Psychologist into a periodical that serves both the association and the members. Some issues have succeeded and some have disappointed. I feel good about the overall product, but that is really left for others to judge.

Now it is time to turn this over to other hands (and blue pencils). As I step aside I’d like to leave a few thoughts about what I’ve learned about the Texas Psychologist. I have tried to adhere to several principles. There are two missions for the T.P.: advocacy and education. Every issue should energize the members about the advocacy efforts of TPA and every issue should bring knowledge and enlightenment to the membership. This is the Texas Psychologist, which to me suggests that articles should be about things affecting Texas psychologists, and should be written by Texas psychologists. I’ve tried to ensure that every issue would update our membership about our science, written by scholars who work at Texas institutions, regardless of whether they are members of TPA; our profession fails if we don’t embrace the scholarship that is the bedrock of our discipline. I also tried to ensure that every issue would enhance our members’ awareness of the role of culture, ethnicity and social class.

The Texas Psychologist is public face of TPA. Copies may find their way to allied professional groups, to the press, and to legislators and other policymakers. We need to display our professionalism at its best with every page. Thus the other mission of the T.P. is to educate readers about the political and regulatory issues that are important to preserving the standards and boundaries of our profession.

Thank You

I have enjoyed the opportunity to work on the Texas Psychologist and I am grateful to TPA for the opportunity. Thanks for indulging me. I would like to express my deep appreciation to the many authors whose work has filled our pages, with special acknowledgment of those from our institutions of research and education. This is not a destination outlet for our academic colleagues but they have found time for TPA. Their contributions have been both high quality and generous...
From the President

A knowledgeable membership is a powerful membership

Greg Simonsen, PhD

Welcome to 2016! This year promises great excitement. There was a time at TPA when the years between legislative sessions seemed calmer, and a respite from the frenetic work of legislative years. Well, those times have passed. TPA’s involvement in legislative endeavors now spans years, regardless of when the Legislature is in session. We are involved in rule making at state agencies to ensure the protection of the profession. We meet with the TSBEP regularly to better represent psychologists as TSBEP protects the public. We are called on to provide research-based opinions for the legal system in important cases. We strategically plan the future of the profession with emphasis on defining ourselves and creating growth opportunities for psychologists. These are just some of the varied things that happen year to year, and while these things are listed with brevity, they are not small things. They are critical since they significantly impact our license and our regulated profession.

A knowledgeable membership is a powerful membership, and it is important to me and our Board of Trustees that TPA members know what is going on. I am committed to our membership being aware of all the important actions in which TPA engages, and while the Board and I are here to serve our members and guide TPA in creating a strong profession, member involvement is crucial to this!

The Texas Psychologist is one of our most important avenues of communication.

In 2016, the Texas Psychologist will cover a variety of topics that are relevant to your membership in TPA and your role as a psychologist in Texas. In this issue, we highlight the award winners from 2015. TPA members are bright, diverse and full of life! The members highlighted in this issue have been acknowledged as giving back important things to TPA and the communities they serve. Find out about your award-winning colleagues and congratulate them on the powerful work they have done for the profession!

beyond expectation. Thanks to them and to all the TPA members who have written for the magazine!

I want to extend special thanks to the TPA staff. Sherry Reisman has steadfastly backstopped this enterprise with the aplomb and attentiveness that she brings to everything TPA does. Lauren Witt deserves special commendation for her excellent work at keeping me on track, and on the very professional page make-up she has done, often under last-minute pressures to make a printer’s deadline. (Last-minute because of me, I confess.) Thank you, Lauren!

I will be available to help with a transition to new editorship if needed, but it won’t be. Your new editor is Cynthia de las Fuentes. She is a former member of the TPA Board of Trustees, she has served as a diversity delegate to APA’s State Leadership Conference, and she has been a dynamo of both energy and good ideas for psychology at both the state and national levels. She’ll bring fresh new perspective to the T.P. and she may call on you to help out. You should say yes, if only for the opportunity to dip into the orbit of her enthusiasm for psychology. I’m excited to see what’s next!

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In future issues, we will be focusing on the work psychologists do as they promote human welfare and advocate for patients, families and communities. It is my hope that in 2016, we will be developing an advocacy agenda focusing on helping the people of Texas through our professional expertise. This advocacy agenda will go hand in hand with our legislative agenda to help build relationships with legislators and show them that TPA is not only interested in guild issues, but also the welfare of the people its members serve in this state.

We will also be discussing Sunset. As many of you know, 2017 is Sunset for the licensing act for psychologists in Texas. TPA is developing a plan which we will submit to the Sunset Legislative Committee this year. TPA’s plan will not only support continued licensure of psychologists in Texas, but also enhance licensure. Our licensing act is THE document in Texas that gives psychologists the legal authority to practice their profession and call themselves psychologists. The outcome of this effort will impact your profession, regardless of your field of specialty, your practice location, or whether you are in a private-pay or a third-party-payer system. TPA needs you as members to stay involved and stay informed about these important issues.

And finally, the Texas Psychologist will be focusing on the good psychologists do. Lately, it seems that across the state and nation, there has been a focus on problems within the psychological community and how psychologists’ behavior may have impacted the community in negative ways. While these are important things to consider, we must also consider the incredible good we do for those around us. TPA members go about their work every day in highly ethical ways, engaging in good work that benefits clients and patients. We will focus on the good we do as a reminder to ourselves and the community that our work is valuable and helpful to the citizens of this state!

The Texas Psychologist is but one of many ways that TPA brings you this important information about the state of our association. It takes a great amount of coordination and work to put together each of these issues, and I am thankful for the hard work that our communications team puts into this publication. After this issue, there will be a change in editor. We are saying goodbye to Brian Stagner, PhD, as editor of the Texas Psychologist. Dr. Stagner has worked diligently to bring the Texas Psychologist to you for many years. I am grateful for his work and commitment to this task. He has been and continues to be a great asset to the members of TPA and Brian is not done! He will be serving TPA as the APA Council Representative. Here’s to wishing Brian a smooth transition to his new role! With Brian’s transition, I had the opportunity to seek out a new editor, and I am pleased to welcome Cynthia de las Fuentes, PhD, to the role. Dr. de las Fuentes has been involved in TPA in a variety of ways over the years. She has been on various committees and has been a member of the Board of Trustees from 2010 to 2013. I am looking forward to her leadership of our communications committee. Our goal is to bring you current, transparent and important information that can enhance your practice and your connection with TPA and its members. So, once again, welcome to 2016! Here’s to an exciting year!

Staring at the Sun
2017 Sunset Review

TSBEP’s Sunset Review will take place in 2017 – when healthcare professional licensing boards in the state get reviewed by the Legislature. Each board is evaluated as to whether or not it is still necessary and functioning properly. Licensed Psychologists (and the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists) are no exception to the review. TPA already has been looking and planning ahead to be best prepared for this review. TPA will be at the Capitol throughout this year fiercely advocating on behalf of psychologists. This year, more than most, it is imperative that psychologists are represented at the Capitol. Share your profession. Share your story. Share your expertise.
As we devote this issue of the *Texas Psychologist* to our 2015 award winners, I also want to congratulate them for their outstanding contribution to the profession and to TPA. I am proud that several of our current Board members are recipients of TPA’s highest honors. Join me in congratulating the 2015 award winners:

**Dr. Robert McPherson**  
*The Lifetime Achievement Award*

**Dr. Megan Mooney**  
*Psychologist of the Year*

**Dr. Ronald Palomares**  
*Outstanding Contribution to Public Service*

**Dr. Alice Ann Holland**  
*Outstanding Contribution to Science*

The Honorable Kevin Eltife  
*Outstanding Legislative Contribution*

**Dr. Anne Morton**  
*The Robert McPherson Legislative Action Award*

**Dr. Carol Grothues**  
*The Paul Andrews Advocacy Award*

I also want to thank the TPA 2015 Board of Trustees for their outstanding leadership and dedication to the profession. As TPA continues to evolve and grow we continue to depend on their leadership to direct and lead us in the ever-changing healthcare environment. Being a TPA board member is a challenging, yet rewarding experience. I encourage everyone to consider getting involved with TPA at any level, whether it involves being a member on one of our task forces, committees, a board member on our Foundation or PAC boards, or experiencing the satisfying experience of serving on the TPA Board. Please join me in welcoming the 2016 Board:

**2016 Board of Trustees**

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- Channing Cochran, *Student Division Director*

**Legislative Knowledge**

TPA has become a player in crafting and developing mental health policy. We are now regularly called upon to review and draft mental health policy and to attend
strategic meetings at state agencies that advance psychologists’ role in servicing citizens of this state, especially the poor and underinsured. That being said, I have stated several times in my past articles that my biggest challenge is explaining to legislators what a psychologist actually does.

We are all aware psychologists are generalists and take an oath to abide by their ethical principles, which state they will not engage in any activities outside their competency. Another way of stating that is that with proper training, psychologists can do pretty much any aspect of providing mental health services. With a doctoral degree, the highest education of any mental health professional, and with specialized training, it is easy to understand how psychologists can become experts in everything.

Explaining that to a legislator, who most of the time is an individual with very limited knowledge of mental health, can become a huge challenge. I am often asked things like, “How can psychologists be experts in dealing with sex offenders and also be experts in working with school children?” “Aren’t they two completely different populations and don’t you deal with them very differently?” Furthermore, psychologists claim to be the leading profession in depression, anxiety, mind/body research, and one of the leaders in child custody and concussion evaluations, and now they want to prescribe medication. “Do psychologists really have the expertise in all these areas?”

My answer to all of these is, “Yes!”

Psychologists are called upon by legislators because psychologists are the experts. However, with the strides we have made over the last several years, I challenge us to be even more aware of opportunities that allow psychologists to educate policymakers. TPA needs every one of you to educate your community on what you do as a psychologist. If you are an expert in children, visit the schools and share with the teachers and parents how to deal with children who are acting out, having disciplinary difficulties, or not excelling in the classroom. If your expertise is in marriage and family issues, contact your local church or synagogue and ask if you could hold a seminar on marital issues. If you are a proficient writer, please submit articles to your local community paper. Seize every opportunity you have to share with someone that you are a psychologist and what you do is important!

You are the experts and I am proud to work on your behalf.

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So your niece wants to major in psychology … uh, be a barista?

Samuel Knapp, EdD, ABPP
Director of Professional Affairs
Pennsylvania Psychological Association

Brian H. Stagner, PhD
Director of Professional Affairs
Texas Psychological Association

In a recent town hall meeting, presidential candidate Jeb Bush commented that getting a psychology degree was a career-decision disaster. He stated, “It is important to have liberal arts…but realize you’re going to be working at Chick-fil-A.” Instead, he stated, young people should go into more technical or vocational fields and become plumbers, electricians, or teachers (Mills, 2015). Mr. Bush’s opinions reflected a wide spread belief disparaging higher education (especially liberal arts) and extolling the value of vocational education. However, a data-driven analysis suggests a more complex picture. This article will look at the economic and non-economic benefits of an undergraduate psychology degree.

Psychology is a popular major. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, in 2011–2012, 109,000 students graduated with undergraduate degrees in psychology (business was the most popular major with 370,000 graduates). After graduation, most psychology majors will enter the workforce directly. Almost 50% will work for for-profit companies, and about 10% will work for government or nonprofit agencies (APA Center for Workforce Studies, 2010). Some common jobs include working in management, customer relations, advertising, sales, criminal justice (such as probation or parole officers), or social-service positions. About one in four psychology graduates will eventually go on for a master’s degree (sometimes in fields other than psychology) and fewer than 5% go on to earn doctoral degrees in psychology.

Is an undergraduate degree in psychology a financial mistake, as Mr. Bush suggests? Many policymakers and pundits share his opinion. This critique of higher education is grounded in an effort to reduce the educational experience to free-market terms. In this analysis, the student is a consumer who is looking for the best value for the tuition dollar. And how is this value to be measured? Income is certainly a good outcome measure. It is concrete, easily captured, interval scale data, and almost everybody can relate to dollars. However, using salaries as the paramount way to keep score represents a seismic change in the role of education. In ancient times, when your authors were in school, students were not viewed as consumers: they were the product. Universities were places to immerse oneself in the breadth and depth of intellectual life of one’s culture in the company of like-minded, energetic young people who were expected to do a lot more than merely acquire job skills. Students and their parents expected universities to produce educated persons, not mere technicians. It is ironic that Mr. Bush (and many others who denigrate higher education) wants to compare university education with vocational school.

Suspending our reservations for the moment, let’s assume that financial gain is really the only legitimate justification for higher education. Even here, the critics have distorted reality for their own argument. From a purely financial perspective, a college education confers life-long earning benefits that more than justify the initial costs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), the unemployment rate of Americans with less than a high school education was 9%, for those with a high school education it was 6%, for those who had completed college it was 3.5%, and for those with doctoral or professional degrees it was less than 2%. In addition, the average college graduate will earn almost twice as much, over their lifetime, than the average high-school graduate (Julian, 2012). The ratio is even greater when compared to the earnings of a high-school dropout.

However, our question focuses more specifically on the economic value of a psychology degree as opposed to a college degree in general. Admittedly, among college majors, psychology is among the lower-paying degrees,
comparable to literature or history degrees. Data gathered from psychology majors who graduated from Texas A&M in 2012 suggest that the average psychology major might expect to enter the workforce earning $38,000 per year (Texas A&M Career Center, 2013). Education and art degrees lead to the poorest occupational future of all degrees (Pathways, 2010). Nonetheless, among psychology graduates, the economic investment historically has paid off, as the average psychology major will make $800,000 more, over the course of a lifetime, than the average high-school graduate (Julian, 2012).

Plumbers, electricians, and other skilled workers provide useful and important public services in rapidly expanding fields. Furthermore, the entry requirements are not overly burdensome. Plumbers and electricians must have a high-school education (although technical training in high school is required, and they must have extensive apprenticeship experiences). Plumbers earn an average of $49,000 per year, and electricians earn an average of $54,000 per year. Although above the national average (which is $47,000 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015), they hardly represent an economic gold mine and, even accounting for the relatively lower educational investment, they do not represent an economic advantage compared with a bachelor's degree in psychology.

We do not mean to imply that all is well in the field of undergraduate psychology education. We can identify two factors that dilute the value of the undergraduate psychology major. First, it is evident that the profession (that's the state and national associations, including both the American Psychological Association and the Association for Psychological Science) have not done enough to promote the value of the psychology major in the larger workplace. Strategies for accomplishing this are beyond the scope of this article, but we hope for a more robust marketing of this major in the future.

The second problem is the numbers and quality of the undergraduates who enter the marketplace. Undergraduate psychology education, like all undergraduate education, is challenged by the rapid explosion of for-profit proprietary schools and predatory career colleges whose graduates have not experienced the economic benefits associated with more traditional undergraduate education. According to one source, graduates of predatory schools earn less, on the average, than high-school graduates (Editorial Board, 2014). A high percentage of students do not graduate with a meaningful education, but nonetheless entail large student debts that they are unable to pay. Some programs have student debt nonpayment rates higher than 40% (Obama Administration, 2014). The Department of Education is in the process of approving regulations that will force these colleges to upgrade their standards or face closure. Given that a number of these schools specifically mention a psychology degree in their marketing, it would behoove our professional associations to likewise develop higher, clearer standards for the undergraduate psychology major.

However, this data-driven analysis shows that, even without upgrading the standards for the major, Mr. Bush's "Chick-fil-A hypothesis" was flawed from a purely economic perspective. A bachelor's degree in psychology will, in the long run, lead to greater earning power than that of a plumber or electrician, although there are individual examples to the contrary. Graduates of predatory, for-profit proprietary schools have not, on the whole, experienced the economic advantages found by graduates of more traditional colleges.

What about the non-economic value of a college education? A college education confers social and individual benefits that go beyond those of economic potential. First, a liberal arts education exposes students to, and helps them appreciate, the performing, visual, and literary arts. This can help them cultivate a lifetime appreciation that will improve the quality of their lives in many ways.

In addition to the humanities, a liberal arts education exposes students to the social sciences. Exposure to disciplines that advocate rigorous methods of inquiry helps students to think independently in their personal lives and as future citizens. Social sciences touch directly on the real-world concerns that young people have as they emerge into adulthood. Ideally, students should learn to value scholarship, and learning to think critically but not cynically (a distinction that has become blurred in contemporary conversation). Although many majors can help students develop critical thinking and communication skills, the psychology major is especially positioned to do so. Psychology touches on other disciplines in a way that few do. Psychology is an integral part of every major discipline that we can think of, and some psychological knowledge appears essential for many disciplines and majors. For example, although Texas A&M has a more than 1000 students who are psychology majors, approximately 7,000 students take the introductory psychology course each year as they fulfill the distributions requirements that other departments impose.

Furthermore, our field is based on rigorous discussions about evidence. We ask students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of empirical claims. We teach students to think about the layers of human experience that range from the specific components of an individual (the neurotransmitter to the neural network to the plasticity of the brain) to their social network (to the personality, the family, the local context) and the larger society (social and multicultural foundations of their lived experience).

Undergraduate psychology majors are in fact filling many roles that are important in our society. A few go on to graduate school, and many others pursue professional education (as lawyers, physicians, nurses, physical therapists, and occupational therapists). Many others move directly into the workforce as probation officers, human resources professionals (e.g. management, public relations, personnel selection, etc.), entrepreneurs, school teachers, and numerous other careers that help hold our communities together. Psychology majors should bring more to the table in all these
roles than the critics might realize. Finally, democracies tend to do better when the citizenship is educated (such as Western Europe, North American, Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, etc.), and authoritarian governments tend to exist when the citizenship lacks widespread education (such as in many Central American or African countries), although there are a few exceptions to this general trend. A poorly educated populace is a boon to bankers, advertisers, politicians and other professional sophists. In contrast, psychology graduates will be better able to think critically. Ideally they will have learned about persuasion techniques (“foot-in-the-door,” “door-in-the-face” techniques, etc.), the way in which heuristics and bias can distort our thinking, the origins of prejudice, and ways to reduce out-group bias. During this election year, the electorate will be subjected to a variety of persuasive cheats and faulty arguments. We will fare better if the public understands the harmfulness of stereotyping, and can identify the fallacies in arguing causality from correlational data. Well trained psychology majors understand these issues.

That does not mean we cannot do better. Undergraduate educators are always challenged with the goal of improving the educational outcomes of their students. We noted some of the challenges experienced by graduates of predatory colleges. Numerous conversations with academics in traditional colleges and universities reveal that psychology departments are experiencing increasing demands to maximize class sizes and to accomplish more with fewer resources. Psychology enjoyed a growth spurt in recent decades, but, as in the world of practice, the golden age has passed. While the undergraduate major remains popular, the high numbers of students are not always matched with commensurate resources. Class sizes mushroom and quality slips.

In addition, psychology teachers are often confronted with non-scientific beliefs of their students. As most teachers of introductory psychology can attest, many students expect psychology to be intuitive, experiential, and easy. Dr. Laura King, the author of a popular introductory textbook in psychology, described this interaction with one student. The student asked, “Dr. King, when are we going to get to psychology?” Dr. King explained that the material they were covering on physiological psychology and perception was psychology. The student replied, “I mean, when are we going to get to psychology, so far this has all just been science?” (King, 2008, p. xvi). They soon learn that psychology is a science (identified as a STEM discipline) and requires hard work to master its knowledge base and methodology. Ideally, graduates will acquire critical thinking and communication skills, information about human behavior, and ways to understand and cooperate with others.

Conclusion

Although some recent psychology graduates might end up working as baristas or other low-paying jobs temporarily while they look for other work, it is misleading to suggest that a psychology major has no meaningful career options. It is also misleading to promote vocational jobs as substantially more financially rewarding than a college degree in psychology. We certainly support opportunities for individuals to become trained as plumbers, electricians, or other skilled workers, however these should not be promoted as occupations designed to rescue under-employed psychology majors. Finally, we need to continually strive to make undergraduate education (including that of psychology majors) meaningful by finding ways to address the exploitative practices of predatory schools, raise the quality standards across all programs, and do a better job of marketing the discipline to the public at large.

Undergraduate students of psychology do more than receive economic benefits from their study. Liberal arts graduates, in general, learn to think critically and appreciate the arts. In addition, psychology students receive a special emphasis on scientific, data-driven reasoning, and the skills that make them more intelligent citizens of a democratic society.

References


Each year at TPA’s Annual Convention, awards are presented to psychologists and other individuals who have made significant contributions to professional psychology. This year’s lineup of award recipients is full of outstanding contributors to the profession of psychology and mental health.

**Paul Andrews, PhD, ABPP, State Advocacy Award**

Carol Grothues, PhD

The Paul Andrews, PhD, ABPP, State Advocacy Award recognizes a member who passionately and tirelessly demonstrates commitment to the advancement of the profession of psychology at the state regulatory level, and Dr. Carol Grothues embodies this description. Dr. Grothues was selected to receive the 2015 Paul Andrews, PhD, ABPP, State Advocacy Award because her dedication and passionate commitment to the advancement of the profession of psychology at the state regulatory level. This dedication is evident through her tireless efforts in representing TPA on the TSBEP Task Force, which monitors all rules that impact the practice of psychology.

Dr. Grothues has provided testimony when needed. Her involvement and leadership as TPA Political Action Committee (PAC) Chair, as well as her involvement in pharmacological advocacy efforts, demonstrate her qualifications and dedication to the protection and improvement of this profession. Serving as both a liaison to TSBEP and Sunset Review chair, she is always knowledgeable about legislative efforts and needs within the state. Dr. Grothues is consistently willing to go the extra mile for our profession, and she is well respected by her colleagues and other professionals. It is because of this commitment that her colleagues chose to honor her as the recipient of this award.
Outstanding Contribution to Science

Alice Ann Holland, PhD, ABPP

Dr. Alice Ann Holland is the recipient of the 2015 TPA Outstanding Contribution to Science award in recognition of her work merging several areas of psychology together that culminated in the child neuropsychology publication: *Effect of Motivation on Academic Fluency Performance in Survivors of Pediatric Medulloblastoma*. Holland, A. A., Hughes, C., Harder, L., Silver, C., Bowers, D. C., & Stavinoha, P. L. (2015). This work is unique in that Dr. Holland merged several areas of psychological science that have not been previously integrated, and demonstrated proof of concept that provides a foundation for a new line of research into cognitive assessment.

Dr. Holland utilized neuropsychological outcomes from childhood brain tumor as a vehicle to merge an examination of effort and motivation and its impact on cognitive test performance in a manner that has never been done in the pediatric assessment literature. Dr. Holland demonstrated that performance speed could be significantly increased under conditions of strong motivation even in a group of children with substantial performance speed deficits, thereby illustrating that a child’s performance on a cognitive test can be manipulated by simply altering motivation. While the finding seems intuitive, this work forms a foundation for a line of research heretofore absent in the neuropsychological literature, and this also has substantial implications for forensic research and application as well as applied clinical work.

Dr. Holland’s significant and unique contribution to the literature merging motivation and effort with cognitive assessment provides a rationale and foundation for future work examining methods to measure, quantify, and account for fluctuations in effort in cognitive assessment, and the implications of this new line of research will touch many aspects of psychology science and practice including forensic research and practice, applied and theoretical neuropsychology, and clinical cognitive assessment.

Outstanding Legislative Contribution

The Honorable Kevin Eltife

Senator Kevin Eltife was selected to receive the TPA 2015 Outstanding Legislative Contribution Award in recognition of his role in passing legislation that has a major impact on the practice of psychology in Texas.

Senator Eltife was the sponsor for HB 1924. This was TPAs primary bill in the 84th Legislative Session, and it will be a landmark piece of legislation for TPA for many years to come; it allows licensed psychologists to supervise predoctoral interns. This supervision is not new for psychologists, as for many years it has been a requirement that license psychologists supervise predoctoral students. However, the important element in this legislation is the ability for psychologists to bill for interns’ services, and it defines interns as a group that will be supervised. Previous law allowed psychologists to bill for services that are delegated to provisionally licensed psychologists or early career psychologists. Now interns are included.

We want to thank Senator Eltife and his staff for helping us pass HB 1924, as this legislation truly opened up the opportunity for our young psychologists to provide much needed psychological services to the citizens of this state.
Dr. Morton has done an outstanding job organizing people to advocate for TPA. As chair of the TPA Grassroots Committee in 2015, and a member of the TPA Legislative Committee, she is extremely knowledgeable about politicians. With this knowledge, Dr. Morton helps TPA psychologists understand the political issues. Because she has contributed to TPA advocacy for many years, Dr. Morton was selected to receive the TPA 2015 Robert McPherson, Ph.D. Legislative Action Award for her commitment to advocacy of the profession of psychology at the local and state levels. Her tireless effort to advance the profession during TPAs 2015 Legislation Session exemplifies the loyalty and dedication that she has for TPA and the profession. It is because of this commitment that her colleagues want to honor her as the recipient of this award.

Dr. Palomares is currently an Assistant Professor at Texas Woman’s University and formerly served as Assistant Executive Director for the American Psychological Association for 13 years. His work to improve the public health spans many years and diverse communities, including volunteer work with military families, disaster relief in Nepal, as well as his advocacy work on behalf of education, communities, and victims of disease. He is currently establishing a referral network for fellow health professionals willing to donate their time and services to improve public health and safety.

In addition to teaching, Dr. Palomares is part of a team of highly experienced psychotherapists who support NGO’s and provide counseling services for the United States military, working in highly stressful situations around the world. He also focuses on the emotional issues arising from humanitarian field work, with the goal of teaching skills to help aid workers stay healthy while helping others.

Dr. Palomares was selected to receive the TPA 2015 Outstanding Contribution to Public Service Award in recognition of his significant contributions that benefit the public. His dedication to work with children and families in third world countries exemplifies his dedication to help people live a better life. His colleagues recognize the sacrifice he has made to advance our profession and thereby recognize Dr. Palomares as the well-deserved recipient of this award.
Dr. Mooney was tireless in her advocacy for HB 1924, “the Intern Bill.” She spent countless hours and considerable energy in moving this bill along every step of the way, while also serving on the TPA Legislative Committee and the TPA Grassroots Committee. Her contributions extend back to 2012, reaching into the 2013 83rd Legislature, and continuing her efforts throughout the 2015 84th Legislature. She frequently testifies on behalf of legislative bills that affect the profession of psychology.

Dr. Mooney is a dedicated clinician and supervisor, advocating for the mental health care of children, particularly those suffering from trauma. She is a Licensed Psychologist and the Staff Psychologist Supervisor for the Trauma Clinic at DePelchin Children’s Center, providing psychological testing in addition to individual and family therapy for children and families. Dr. Mooney specializes in a number of areas, including trauma, psychological assessment, and working with LGBTQ youth. With both her Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Arkansas, Dr. Mooney is an Assistant Professor with the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Baylor College of Medicine. She is also an active member of multiple organizations including the American Psychological Association, the Texas Psychological Association, the Houston Psychological Association and the Society for Personality Assessment.

Her leadership exemplifies the loyalty and dedication she has for TPA and the profession, and this award recognizes her as one of the leaders in the profession. She was truly instrumental on our legislative successes. Dr. Mooney exhibits all of the well-rounded qualities for “Psychologist of the Year.”
Across his near forty-year career, Dr. Robert McPherson has left for the better an indelible impact on psychology in Texas. He began his career in 1976 overseeing a peer counseling program and teaching psychology at a Title 1, minority-serving high school in Odessa, Texas. Three years later, he left the Friday night lights of West Texas and enrolled in the counselor education doctoral program at the University of Houston.

As a first-year student, he developed and presented to the faculty a curriculum proposal to transform his degree program into an APA accredited counseling psychology program. His proposal was accepted, and he was among the first graduates of the new program.

The University of Houston (UH) has been Dr. McPherson’s primary professional home for the duration of his career as a psychologist. Over the years, he has served UH as Director of its Learning Support Services Center, staff psychologist at the University Counseling Center, Director of Training for the Counseling Psychology program, Chairperson for the Department of Educational Psychology, and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, then Executive Associate Dean for the College of Education. Dr. McPherson currently serves as the Dean, Elizabeth D. Rockwell Chair for the College. Under his leadership, the College successfully launched a new Ph.D. program in school psychology, doubled the number of new faculty, enjoyed national top-five rankings for its teacher preparation programs and online graduate degree program, and has seen external funding expenditures double in the past three years. Of note, Dr. McPherson also recently assumed oversight of the University’s expansion at its Sugar Land campus as the Interim Associate Provost, Academic Affairs and Operations.

In addition to being an accomplished administrator, teacher, and scholar, Dr. McPherson is also a successful entrepreneur. He and former UH colleague Stewart Pisecco co-founded Psychological Software Solutions, an award-winning software-as-service company that provides consultation services and web-based behavioral management and progress monitoring systems for large school districts throughout the United States. Their company was recognized by Inc Magazine as one of the country’s 100 fastest-growing companies in 2010 and was acquired by Pearson in 2012.

Dr. McPherson’s service to the profession has been exceptional. He is former Chair of the national Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs and previously served as president of the Texas and Houston Psychological Associations, as well as the Texas Psychological Foundation. Among his many TPA contributions, he served as our representative to the APA Council of Representatives and TPA’s first Director of Professional Affairs. He currently serves as Chair of the TPA Finance Committee. Dr. McPherson has been TPA’s fiercest champion in defense of the doctoral standard for the practice of psychology, and he has played a significant leadership role in the renewal of the Texas Psychologists’ Licensing Act during the past two legislative Sunset reviews.

Dr. McPherson is a Fellow of both the American Psychological and American Education Research Associations. He has been inducted into the National Academies of Practice and is a recipient of the American Psychological Association’s Karl Heiser Award in recognition of his state and national advocacy contributions on behalf of psychologists and their patients. And of course, the Texas Psychological Association has named its legislative advocacy award in his honor.

Finally, with this brief retrospect of his accomplished career, we would be remiss not to mention his performances with Rick McGraw at several TPA and APA conventions as the infamous TPA Blues Brothers.

We are pleased to award him the association’s highest honor, the Texas Psychological Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award.
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The Texas Psychological Foundation is dedicated to the growth and strength of psychology as a discipline and profession through the support of research and scholarship to deserving undergraduate and graduate psychology students. Because of the support of our Friends in 2015, TPF was able to steadfastly walk out this mission by funding its Graduate Student Research Proposal Award ($1,500). This award is designed to provide funding for a graduate student's research proposal related to the broad area of psychotherapy. Additionally, TPF judged and awarded three monetary prizes for the Annual Student Poster Competition. Continue to join us in promoting the future of psychology in Texas in 2016. You can become a Friend of TPF online at www.texaspsyc.org/donations.

Graduate Student Research Proposal Award - $1,500
Michelle Clementi, M.A. (University of Houston)
Efficacy of an Integrated Sleep and Anxiety Intervention for Childhood Generalized Anxiety Disorder: A Randomized Controlled Trial

2015 Poster Competition Winners

1st Place
Lane, K.M. (2015, November). Priming, Negative Perception and Effects of Ethnic-Sounding Names: Name-Based Discrimination in Minority Communities.

2nd Place

3rd Place

2015 TPF President Dr. Angela Cool presents the 2015 Graduate Student Research Proposal Award to Ms. Michelle Clementi during the Annual Awards Luncheon.

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