



Corner

American Academy of Health Physics
American Board of Health Physics

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From the ABHP Attic

Frazier L. Bronson, CHP

Several years ago when I was researching the ABHP history [Bronson, F.L., "American Board of Health Physics: The first 35 years," *Health Physics*, 67, 454-470 (1994)], I requested contributions of memories, accomplishments, and other interesting tidbits from each of the ABHP Board Members. Following are excerpts—with slight editing—from two of the replies regarding the creation of the ABHP and the Board's relationship to the HPS.

Jack Healy's letter begins with an admonition from Herb Parker that 30-year-old events are remembered differently by different people. Jack was a member of the Board from 1960-1964. As Jack remembers it:

The Society had been formed for several years and serious thought was being given to formation of a certification group. The Oak Ridge faction was probably the leader in this, with Elda Anderson as the chief instigator. However, many of us were troubled with the questions as to how one could meaningfully certify people in a field that is as broad as health physics. At a Society meeting in Gatlinburg, Elda met the questions head on by stating that the Board would not certify people for their knowledge in any one specialty. Instead the ABHP would attempt to certify the individual as to how he would function. Is he the type of person who would turn down a job that he could not handle? Can he learn new things? Does he have good judgment in performing his duties? Of course, knowledge of the basics necessary in all specialties was considered important and would be included. I was a member of the first Board and went to the meeting with a concern that the Board not be dominated by the Society. I believed the Board should be an independent organization making its own decisions and proceeding as it thought best. One day, Bill McAdams came to me and indicated that there was a tragedy about to happen. Elda had leukemia. I accepted the role of

Chairman so that Elda would not have this extra burden. The biggest chore of the ABHP was preparing for the first examination. Finally, (after the first exam was completed and graded) Bill got the ABHP charter through, and we were ready to issue the certificates that Bill had designed and procured. Since I was working in the same building as Bill, the final signing was easy. However, I grabbed the first pen that I came to, which happened to have blue ink, and signed. Bill was livid because they would have been much neater in black ink. At any rate, the certificates went out and the Board was in business.

Note: The ABHP has since created an annual award for service toward the goals of professionalism in Health Physics. This award was named in honor of William McAdams, and the first recipient was Jack Healy.

From Karl Z. Morgan, a Board member from 1963-1967, came the following response:

The need and desire for the formation of the ABHP was not a sudden inspiration of a single person on a single day. Rather it was the culmination of and fulfillment of the desire of many of us to make health physics a science and a profession. With all of these developments and with an increasing number of active health physicists, we found it difficult to keep in touch, so Francis Bradley invited all persons interested in forming a society to meet together at Ohio State University in June 1955. It would be unthinkable that the next step of a scientific and professional society would not be the development of a certification process, and in 1960, after discussions among early leaders of the society, the ABHP was established. During my period of service as member of the ABHP I had two main concerns: 1. To keep a proper balance between applied health physics and theoretical and experimental aspects of health physics, and 2. To make sure the applicant recognized that his responsibility as a professional is to protect man and his environment from the risks associated with exposure to radiation. I believe that the ABHP has done a good job in reference to 1, above, but for the most part it has failed in number 2. I have always advocated that we adopt an HP Hippocratic oath. To many health physicists the primary goal evidently is to protect the employer and not to protect the employee. I believe scientific and professional integrity should transcend all other responsibilities, goals, and aspirations of a Certified Health Physicist.

DON'T FORGET:

AAHP Special Session - "The CHP in a Court of Law"

8:30 - 11:00 a.m. Wed., 24 July 1996, Seattle, WA

11:00 a.m. - AAHP Open Meeting