



## News From the AVAPL Business Meeting at the 2010 APA Convention

Greetings,

It was good to see many of you at the American Psychological Association's (APA) annual convention in San Diego, CA, August 12-15, 2010. For those of you who were not able to be at the APA Convention this year or who had overlapping meetings and presentations, the AVAPL Executive Board would like to bring a little bit of the APA Convention to you.



We had our annual business meeting on Friday, August 13, 2010, where reports were read and approved. Once the business portion of the meeting concluded, our guests from APA (Dr. Nina Levitt, Dr. Diane Elmore, and Dr. Heather O'Beirne Kelly) provided a report of

their advocacy work related to VA during the past year, and we discussed possible ways to strengthen the relationship between APA, AVAPL, and the VA Office of Mental Health Services based on common agendas.

The highlight of our meeting each year is the presentation of awards to VA psychologists for the work they do. Awards we presented this year are:

### **Distinguished Leadership Award**

This is a new award created to recognize the work of VA psychologist leaders who excel in their leadership accomplishments and present an exemplary model for the rest of us. The first recipient of

this award is Dr. Antonette Zeiss, Acting Deputy Chief Patient Care Services Officer for Mental Health. Dr. Zeiss has excelled in all professional activities throughout her career. She completed her



Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 1977 at the University of Oregon and began her career as an Assistant Professor at Arizona State University. While contributing 20 years in academia with some overlap with her work at the Palo Alto VA Medical Center, she also maintained a private practice from 1990-2004. In 2005 she became the Deputy Chief Consultant, Office of Mental Health Services (OMHS) in VA Central Office (VACO). Dr. Zeiss has been a researcher, author, editor, teacher, mentor, administrator, clinician, and pioneer. She is the first psychologist and the first woman to act as Deputy Chief Patient Care Services Officer for Mental Health, a tremendous accomplishment! She excels in all she does

and is a distinguished and greatly respected leader whose contributions are truly outstanding. Thank you, Dr. Zeiss, for what you have done for VA Psychology and our nation's veterans.

## **Leadership Award**

The Leadership Award is given to VA psychologists who demonstrate superior leadership skills in the course of their work, and that certainly describes Dr. Mary Schohn, this year's recipient of the AVAPL Leadership Award. She received her doctorate in 1991 from State University of New York at Buffalo and has worked in the VA since 1990. She has demonstrated her leadership skills in each of the positions she has held in VA. Dr. Schohn began her career in the VA as a Clinical Psychologist for eight years before she accepted the responsibilities of the Chief Clinical Officer for VISN 2 in 1998. In 2007, she began her current position as the Behavioral Health Care Line Director in VISN 2. In addition to her Director responsibilities, she has been a member of key VHA MH work groups (Clinical Liaison, Productivity, Stop Code). She has been a member of the VHA Systems Redesign Clinical Subcommittee from 2006 to the present. Other VHA work groups include Advance Clinic Access and Treatment of Incarcerated Veterans/Chair. Currently Dr. Schohn is temporarily detailed to the Office of Under Secretary for Health Operations and Management. She serves as the lead for the Improve Mental Health Initiative in collaboration with the office of Healthcare Transformation (10T). Thank you, Dr. Schohn, for your dedication to supporting and improving the VA Health Care System and the treatment provided to Veterans.

## **Professional Service Award**

Dr. David Carroll received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 1986 from Ohio University. He began his career in Milwaukee VA as a pre-doctoral intern and was hired as a psychologist in VA in 1990 with a clinical position in geriatrics. Subsequently while continuing in his clinical position he was selected as Chair of the Ethics Committee, supervisor for the Palliative Care Postdoctoral Fellow, and Chief of Psychology. He maintained these collateral responsibilities when he left his position in geriatrics to assume the responsibilities as Chief of the Domiciliary. Dr. Carroll is now the

Coordinator for the Local Recovery Coordinators in the VACO, OHMS Psychosocial Rehabilitation section. In addition, for the past two years he has co-chaired the planning committee for the OMHS Conference, and this year he has been detailed to the VA Mental Health Intensive Case Management program (MHICM). He excels at all he does, and we thank you Dr. Carroll for your many examples of professional service to VA and our nations' veterans.

Dr. Ken Major, our second recipient of the Professional Service Award this year, was the Acting Dom Chief for 6 months prior to his being selected to fill the position and become the Dom Chief at the San Antonio VA Medical Center in 2005. During this time VA Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (RRTP) were undergoing an extensive transformation to meet new guidelines detailed in the RRTP Handbook developed in the VA Office of Mental Health Services. He continues to successfully lead his team through the challenges and chaos one encounters when people who have always done something a certain way are told that they need to change and do it differently. Dr. Major was competitively selected to participate in the VISN 17 Leadership Development Institute and applies what he learned to his work in the Dom. He has served as a member of the Psychology Training Committee and currently serves as the Practicum Training Director. He has an open door policy and not only makes himself available to patients but also to trainees and staff. He is described as one with a "willingness to always pitch in when assistance is needed." Thank you, Dr. Major for all you do for our veterans and the support you provide to staff.

## **Special Contribution Award**

This award recognizes VA Psychologists who make contributions above and beyond the normal duties of their job. This year we recognized two VA Psychologists who personify and take "above and beyond" to a new level.



Dr. Lisa Kearney obtained her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin. She began her VA career as a pre-doctoral intern after which she was hired full time as a staff psychologist to further establish the primary care-mental health integration program, something she had begun as an intern. Prior to her becoming the Chief of Psychology at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System, she was the Training Director and Assistant Chief of Psychology. Dr. Kearney has been dedicated to service in psychology locally and at the national level, serving on the Board of the Association of Psychology Post-doctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) and as the President of the Bexar County Psychological Association. She is currently serving her third year as Chair of the VA Psychology Leadership Conference. Traditionally the American Psychological Association has managed the finances for the Leadership Conference and donated an immeasurable number of support staff hours to put the conference on. This past year that changed because of the economic challenges to the APA budget. AVAPL agreed to provide the financial backing for the conference, and Dr. Kearney

was instrumental in assuring the success of the conference earlier this spring. Along with donating a considerable amount of her personal time, she demonstrated superior negotiation skills as she worked with the hotel to draft a contract that minimized AVAPL's financial risk. Her dedication and hard work were essential to offering the conference this year, and her leadership produced an exciting and very well received result. Thank you, Dr. Kearney for all the extra time and effort you have provided to assure the continued success of the VA Psychology Leadership Conference.

Dr. Jeffrey Burk, National Mental Health Director for Psychosocial Rehabilitation in the VA Central Office, Office of Mental Health Services, also received a Special Contribution award. Dr. Burk has been honored before by AVAPL for his many contributions in administration, clinical service, leadership, community service, psychology training, and the VA Psychology Leadership Conference, yet his gift of service continues with his tireless efforts this past year in supporting the annual VA Psychology Leadership Conference. During this past year, with APA not able to financially support the conference in the same way as in years past, some of us wondered if we could still put on the conference, knowing it would be financially risky and logistically difficult to do so. One of the items which needed to be addressed early on was the registration process. We needed to open registration quite early to ascertain the number of participants committed to attending in order to better predict conference costs. The task seemed daunting. In the past, faxing and mailing in registrations had proven to be an overwhelming endeavor. Dr. Burk created the solution. He spent hours building a conference-specific website and programming it to allow for easy conference registration and fee payment. Because of his efforts, the conference planning committee was able to open the website for registration in November and by January we knew the conference would financially solvent with a record number of early registrations. One would think his sacrificial giving of his time would end there – but his generous spirit proved to be unending. He continued to maintain and organize all registrations with the kind assistance of the AVAPL treasurer, Dr. Ann Landes. Countless phone calls, emails, and confirmations later, the conference had a record number of attendees—189! Thank you, Dr. Burk for all the hours of your own time you donate to AVAPL every year.

The AVAPL Executive Board would like to also thank you, its members, for joining the organization and supporting AVAPL in its mission to advocate for VA Psychologists. Our organization and its efforts are entirely supported by your membership and participation and we especially appreciate that given all the other demands on your time and personal budgets.

During the coming year we ask that you think about who should be honored at APA in 2011. We are an organization with no end of wonderful people and talented leaders and we rely on you to submit nominations for these awards. Please submit nomination letters to Dr. June Malone, AVAPL Past President for those who excel in VA Psychology leadership and service.

Sincerely,

June Malone, Ph.D.  
AVAPL Past President

and

George Shorter, Ph.D.  
AVAPL President