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## What's Past is Prologue: The History of the Discipline of Pharmacy Administration

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In 1985, the History of the Discipline of Pharmacy Administration (the *History*) was contributed to the literature. This document provided the first major historical review of our dynamic and multi-faceted discipline. The dedication of the *History* eloquently describes the hope of the authors for this major project:

*"This chronicle of human and academic events is dedicated to all those men and women who have been, are, and will become a party to the growth and development of pharmacy administration as a major discipline in the education of a pharmacist. It says to those who were here that they are a part of the future. It reminds those of the future that they have real human roots in the past." (page ii)*

Joseph L. Fink, Chairman of the AACP Section of Teachers of Pharmacy Administration, provided the impetus for this project in 1979. He appointed a special committee on the history of the discipline of pharmacy administration. In his charge, he asked the committee to "tackle the preparation of a paper to document the evolution of the discipline." In addition, he believed that there was a possibility "to include some information about some pharmacy administration "notables" as well as some shifts in direction of the discipline." The members of this special committee included those individuals who were some of the true pioneers in the discipline of pharmacy administration: Robert V. Evanson, Joseph D. McEvilla, Robert W. Hammel, and Robert J. DeSalvo.

The final product was much more than a paper made available to the members of the Section. The final version was a document consisting of seven chapters, multiple appendices and nearly 200 pages in length: [A History of Pharmacy Administration](#). As the committee members realized when reporting their progress after the first year of their charge that this project would not be a "glossed-over statement" but a thorough review documenting occurrences, dates, and people. Beginning in 1900 with the origins of AACP, into the 1950s where the term "pharmacy administration" was coined and the discipline's first PhDs were produced, and up to the early 1980s when the document was completed, the authors provide an orderly examination of the evolution of the discipline.

Our discipline owes a debt of gratitude to Professor Fink for his vision and leadership to start this important project. Up to this point in time, the discipline of Pharmacy Administration had been evolving since the earliest training of pharmacists and there was little to nothing in the literature attesting to the historical progression of the discipline. The committee members also recognized the importance of this document and a key reason for the undertaking of such a project was to "take some advantage of the life experiences and knowledge of certain persons who were knowledgeable of past years and people." (page iii) Historians document the development of a discipline by recording dates, places, people and facts. However, one aspect that makes this document so valuable to our profession is that the reporting is coming from those who helped create the history.

Whether a graduate student, new faculty member, or experienced academician involved in the administrative, economic, or social behavioral components of pharmacy education, I strongly encourage you to download this digital copy for review. It may surprise the reader how similar some of the issues from our history continue to ring true today. The *History* tells a wonderful story about the evolution of a discipline – molded by events, circumstances, and individuals that were all synergized by passion, focus, and dedication, with a little serendipity added for good measure.

### Call to Action

Our discipline again finds itself at a point in time where nearly 30 years of history has been achieved, yet very little documented or discussed. The *History* provides a solid foundation from which to begin the documentation of the next stages of our discipline's evolution.

I am taking this opportunity to invite our discipline to participate in the continued documentation of our history. I am in the early stages of creating an updated "History of the Discipline". It is again time to take advantage of individuals with the life experience and knowledge of the past to help create a document in the present that I hope will continue to enhance our future as a discipline.

A variety of audiences will be receiving invitations to contribute their knowledge and life experiences – including but certainly not limited to department chairs, deans, current and past chairs of our discipline's various professional organization sections and committees. These invitations will contain specific requests for data that will be used for the creation of the updated History. In addition, I have created

an email account to attempt to focus the collection of data – [PharmAdHistory@gmail.com](mailto:PharmAdHistory@gmail.com). The invitations will include this email address, however, if you are interested in contributing information, material, etc., feel free to drop me a note.

While the use of technology will be invaluable in creating this update, the project will also rely on “old school” methods to collect this information – phone, fax, USPS, smoke signal, etc. PASS THE WORD...contact your mentors and colleagues and share the news of this project. Feel free to print the emailed invitations and fax or mail to those certain individuals that might be interested in sharing their experiences.

As Schommer, Hadsall, and Anderson pointed out in the first “[The Past is Prologue](#)” commentary<sup>1</sup>, it is critical to begin saving important historical documents. As I have already found during my recent forays into various archives and historical repositories, the lack of key documents and saved materials is stunning. In addition to contributing to the literature, I also hope that this project will be able to preserve our discipline’s heritage.

#### Reference

1. Schommer, JC, RA Hadsall, LJ Anderson, "What's Past is Prologue: The Pharmaceutical Syllabus of 1910," *INNOVATIONS in pharmacy*, Vol. 2, No. 1, article 28 (2 pages).