

# PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY



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## Patricia Bricklin, We Hardly Knew Ye

by Joseph L. French, Ed.D. ABPP

This article was initially written to thank Patricia (Pat) M. Bricklin for her contributions to the licensing of professional psychologists as she was finishing her latest term with the State Board of Psychology. Sadly, Dr. Bricklin passed away on Dec.21, 2010 and this article is now a memorial to her.

Pat Bricklin had been closely associated with the licensing of psychologists for 40 years in Pennsylvania and across North America. She has been a constant force on the Pennsylvania State Board of Psychology off and on since the board was authorized, concluding her latest term this December.

As a woman, Pat had a hard time breaking into doctoral psychology despite having a master's from Johns Hopkins and high-test scores. Before the late 1960s, only men were admitted to doctoral study in psychology. Only a very few women were admitted to doctoral study in psychology in a few universities. After many applications, Pat was admitted at Temple University where she met and married her husband, Barry.

It was commonly assumed that women who started families would not graduate. Barry finished in 1959, and Pat, having two sons while in doctoral study, proved the admission committees wrong and graduated in 1963. It was an important step in breaking the glass ceiling in psychology. Pat and Barry later added two daughters to their family, giving Pat wonderful opportunities for "home study" of maturing children.

Being well prepared practically, educationally and professionally, Pat and Barry were on the Philadelphia radio airwaves for years with a very popular call-in talk show.

Pat's first job in psychology was as an associate director and consultant to the Parkway Day School (and a practicing psychologist). In 1970 she moved over to academics at Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital and, later, moved with most of that psychology faculty to Widener University. At Widener, the Pat Bricklin Award in School Psychology is awarded annually to a third year student.

In the 1970s, Pat continued to break glass ceilings for women. She served as a consultant to the legislative staff formulating the Professional Psychologists Practice Act of 1972. In addition, she was the only woman appointed to the first state board for regulation of psychologists in Pennsylvania. Among the six board members, she was elected vice chair (not secretary or treasurer), again breaking part of the glass ceiling. After the board was assembled, they had few resources to support their work, but managed with tablets, pencils and staplers of their own.

After a few years as vice chair, Pat became chair and served as chair for most of the past 30 years. During this time, republican and democrat governors appointed Pat to the board with breaks in service of a few months to a few years between the end of one appointment and the beginning of another.

As chair of the Pennsylvania board, Pat illustrated excellent qualities of leadership. She led discussions effectively on questions before the board and engaged the whole board by calling on reticent members for comments. Although she often had strong opinions on an issue, she would question those with her opinion or the opposite opinion for their points of view. She often praised members for their work. Many of these discussions took place when drafting regulations for the 1972 practice act, its 1986 amendment, and Act 52 in 2003 or some critical amendment to those regulations.

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Although Pat's professional practice started with children and adolescents, emphasizing the psychology of reading and effective programs for learning disabled children, she had developed an extended range of expertise. She was a member of nine divisions and a fellow of eight divisions of the American Psychology Association (APA). Based primarily on her psychological service at the Parkway Day School, her radio show and her publications, she first became a fellow in the APA Division of School Psychology.

She was on the board of directors of the APA Insurance Trust and a member, sometimes chair, of many APA boards and committees. Recognizing these many volunteer services, she received the APA 2006 Gold Medal for Life Achievement.

The Pennsylvania Psychological Association (PPA) was another group in which she was an active, vigorous leader in committees, whether she was chair of the committee or not. She was in the presidential chairs in 1975-76 and, later, received several awards including the Distinguished Service Award in 1983 and the Distinguished Contributions to School Psychology Award in 2009 for "a life dedicated to education ... providing services with leadership ... contributing to legal and ethical practices ... (and being) an outreach pioneer to the media...."

There is one PPA award she could not receive: The Pat Bricklin Award to a graduate student bestowed by the Pennsylvania Psychological Foundation each spring at the ethics educators conference.

Pat's leadership on the state board led to leadership in the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB), an association composed of members from 64 jurisdictions in Canada, the United States and some of its territories. After demonstrating clear thinking and a strong work ethic, she was elected president of ASPPB from 1987-88. She became an ASPPB fellow in 1990 (the first year fellows were elected), and, later, was the recipient of the Morton Berger Award in 1991 and the Roger C. Smith Award in 1995.

Thirteen Pennsylvanians have been named fellows of ASPPB in the last 20 years, most of them nominated by Pat. This list, which constitutes more than 10 percent of the ASPPB fellows, includes a commissioner, two public members and a test expert with the vendor for the ASPPB examination.

With these and other accomplishments, past and current members of the Pennsylvania State Board of Psychology salute Patricia Bricklin for her contributions to the board and the entire field of psychology.

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