

**THE EARLY HISTORY OF  
THE WESTERN SOCIETY FOR PEDIATRIC RESEARCH**

**BY**

**FORREST H. ADAMS, MD**

**AND**

**ROBERT A. ALDRICH, MD**

**FORMER PRESIDENTS OF THE SOCIETY**

Before the early history of the Western Society for Pediatric Research (WSPR) is recounted, it seems appropriate to make a few comments about the American Pediatric Society (APS) and the Society for Pediatric Research (SPR). These two academic societies acted as a template for the WSPR and many of us were members and active participants in their programs.

The formation of the APS in 1888 and the SPR in 1931 are well documented elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> For those interested in the whys and wherefores of scientific organizations, such recounting makes for interesting reading.

The founders of the APS “were mainly young or youngish men and nearly all of the founders taught in medical schools or hospital centers; all were practitioners, but very few limited their practices to pediatrics.”<sup>1</sup> The original forty-three members of the APS included such great physicians as: William Osler, L. Emmett Holt, A. Jacobi, T.M. Rotch, W.D. Booker, H. Koplik, S.S. Adams, S. Baruch, V.C. Vaughn, etc.

The purpose of the APS was “to bring together men and women for the advancement of the study of children and their diseases, for the prevention of illness and the promotion of health in childhood, for the promotion of pediatric education and research, and to honor those who, by their contribution to pediatrics, have aided in its advancement.”<sup>1</sup> The APS had annual meetings usually in the spring, and nearly always on the east coast. Both its membership and the attendance at its meetings remained small for the first 30-40 years, but after World War II both increased dramatically.

In the early years, “the APS membership was purposely limited, it seldom welcomed papers by nonmembers, and its meetings were not open to the public.”<sup>1</sup> Invited guests were an exceptional event. Thus, as the pediatric academic community began to grow, particularly in the field of clinical investigation, the younger pediatric researchers pushed for an organization of their own; and they have been called “the Pediatric Young Turks.” The first meeting of this new group called the Eastern Society for Pediatric Research was held March 1929 in Boston and twenty-five attended. At subsequent meetings; the name was changed to Society for Pediatric Research (SPR); the requirements for membership were that the person must be dependably launched on a career in pediatric research; membership was to include Canada and Mexico; and the applicant had to be younger than 45 years. The SPR also held most of its meetings on the East Coast, generally in conjunction with the APS. The SPR meetings were open to visitors and the visitors were allowed to comment on presentations. These policies of SPR were eventually adopted by the APS.

Now for the early history of the Western Society for Pediatric Research (WSPR). A number of the Chairs of Pediatric Departments in the western United States saw early in the 1950's a need to promote pediatric research as an important aspect of their respective pediatric programs. Since the APS and SPR meetings generally took place on the East Coast and travel to them was both expensive and time consuming, only a limited

number of persons could afford to attend their meetings. A forum to present and discuss pediatric research performed in the West was needed. It was believed that such a meeting: would promote research in the western departments; would promote collaboration in research in the West; would allow each of the departments to put on an “open house” to show off its facilities and programs; and would strengthen the “drawing power” to attract talented people to the West and thus build up our departments. These above ideas were generated in 1953 in a San Francisco hotel room by the following individuals:

John Anderson - Stanford	Edward Shaw - UCSF
John Adams - UCLA	Robert Aldrich - Oregon
Alan Hill - Oregon	Forrest Adams - UCLA
Carolyn Piel - UCSF	

The Society was named the Western Society for Pediatric Research (WSPR). Its membership was to include all of those from the Western United States and Canada who were engaged in clinical or basic research. There were to be no age restrictions on membership and the scientific meetings were to be open to those interested in its proceedings. The purpose of the WSPR was similar to that adopted by the APS as already mentioned.

An important element in the early meetings of the WSPR beginning in 1953 was the rotation of the meeting site from city to city to allow each of the departments to “show off” its facilities and programs. The Year, Place and Host of the first 14 meetings is shown in Table I. This rotation proved to be very successful and its objectives were met. Table II shows the Officers for the same period and Table III shows the Members of the Council.

Interest in the programs of the WSPR grew rapidly. By 1963, there were over 175 active members from most of the medical schools in the west. Beginning in 1957, Ross Laboratories offered to fund two awards, one in Pediatric Research and one in Pediatric Education. The recipients of these early awards is shown in Table IV. Specialty Sessions in Cardiology, Hematology, Genetics, Metabolism, Endocrinology, Infectious Diseases, Neurology, and Development were begun in 1959. They proved to be very successful, and resulted in an increase in interest in WSPR meetings.

**EDITORIAL NOTE:** Dr. Joan Hodgman of UCLA, a long time member and supporter of the WSPR, supplied some of the history after 1966. It was decided by the Council and approved by the membership to hold the meetings in conjunction with Internal Medicine

Societies, the Western Association of Physician (WAP), the Western Section of AFCD (WSAFCD), the Western Society of Clinical Investigation (WSCI) and the dermatologists. It seemed logical, synergistic and cost effective to join together with our internist colleagues, thus the WSPR happily found its "home" in Carmel where it has remained for the past 20 years. Currently, we have 641 Active members and 59 Emeritus members. Last year we admitted a record of 40 new members to the society. We wish for the continued healthy growth and prosperity of the WSPR!

#### Reference

1. Faber, H.K. and McIntosh, R. History of the American Pediatric Society. MCGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966

# TABLE I

## ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

### WESTERN SOCIETY FOR PEDIATRIC RESEARCH

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>HOST</u>
1953	SAN FRANCISCO	STANFORD UNIVERSITY
1954	PORTLAND	UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
1955	LOS ANGELES	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, L.A.
1956	SALT LAKE CITY	UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
1957	SAN FRANCISCO	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, S.F.
1958	VANCOUVER	UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
1959	LOS ANGELES	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, L.A.
1960	DENVER	UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
1961	SAN FRANCISCO	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, S.F.
1962	SEATTLE	UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
1963	LOS ANGELES	UNIVERSITY OF SO. CALIFORNIA
1964	SALT LAKE CITY	UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
1965	PORTLAND	UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
1966	PALO ALTO	STANFORD UNIVERSITY
1967	LOS ANGELES	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, L.A.
1968	DENVER	UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
1969	SAN FRANCISCO	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, S.F.

**TABLE II**  
**OFFICERS OF THE**  
**WESTERN SOCIETY FOR PEDIATRIC RESEARCH**

	<u><b>PRESIDENT</b></u>	<u><b>VICE-PRESIDENT</b></u>	<u><b>SECRETARY-TREASURER</b></u>
1953-54	JOHN ANDERSON	ROBERT ALDRICH	FORREST ADAMS
1954-55	ROBERT ALDRICH	JAMES BOSMA	ROBERT ALWAY
1955-56	JAMES BOSMA	WILLIAM DEAMER	ROBERT ALWAY
1956-57	WILLIAM DEAMER	FREDERICK MOLL	ROBERT ALWAY
1957-58	FREDERICK MOLL	JOHN ADAMS	VINCENT KELLEY
1958-59	JOHN ADAMS	C. HENRY KEMPE	VINCENT KELLEY
1959-60	C. HENRY KEMPE	CAROLYN PIEL	VINCENT KELLEY
1960-61	CAROLYN PIEL	VINCENT KELLEY	DENMAN HAMMOND
1961-62	VINCENT KELLEY	FORREST ADAMS	DENMAN HAMMOND
1962-63	FORREST ADAMS	EUGENE LAHEY	DENMAN HAMMOND
1963-64	EUGENE LAHEY	RICHARD OLMSTED	DONOUGH O'BRIEN
1964-65	RICHARD OLMSTED	NORMAN KRETCHMER	DONOUGH O'BRIEN
1965-66	NORMAN KRETCHMER	STANLEY WRIGHT	DONOUGH O'BRIEN
1966-67	STANLEY WRIGHT	DONOUGH O'BRIEN	MALCOLM HOLLIDAY

### TABLE III

#### WESTERN SOCIETY FOR PEDIATRIC RESEARCH

#### MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1953-54	EDWARD B. SHAW, ROBERT F. CHINNOCK
1953-55	C. HENRY KEMPE, JOHN F. McCREARY
1953-56	VINCENT C. KELLEY, FREDERIC C. MOLL
1954-57	FORREST ADAMS, CAROLYN F. PIEL
1955-58	PHILIP STURGEON, ALLEN J. HILL, JR.
1956-59	JOHN H. GITHENS, GEOFFREY ROBINSON
1957-60	MOSES GROSSMAN, ARTHUR H. PARMELEE, JR.
1958-61	LESLIE CORSA, RUTH GROSS, DONALD PICKERING (1960-61)
1959-62	THOMAS SHEPARD, SYDNEY SEGAL, ROBERT CHINNOCK (1961-62)
1960-63	DONOUGH O'BRIEN, PATRICK F. BRAY
1961-64	LUIGI LUZATTI, ALAN K. DONE
1962-65	J. RODMAN SEELY, WILLIAM TOOLEY
1963-66	DAVID CHADWICK, THOMAS K. OLIVER
1964-67	JOHN F. WILSON, LEONARD LINDE, EUGENE LAHEY (1966-67)
1965-68	SYDNEY ISRAELS, ROBERT GREENBERG
1966-69	SOL KAPLAN, THOMAS SHEPARD

TABLE IV

WESTERN SOCIETY FOR PEDIATRIC RESEARCH  
RECIPIENTS OF ROSS AWARDS

<u>FOR PEDIATRIC RESEARCH</u>		<u>FOR PEDIATRC EDUCATION</u>
ROBERT S. ELY	1957	JOHN H. GITHENS
DONALD E. PICKERING	1958	---
ALAN K. DONE	1959	ROBERT W. DEISHER
THOMAS A. GOOD	1960	---
DOUGLAS C. HEINER	1961	---
LEONARD M. LINDE	1962	HENRY K. SILVER
ROBERT E. GREENBERG	1963	MOSES GROSSMAN
ROBERT P. IGO	1964	---
VINCENT A. FULGINITI	1965	---
STARKEY DEE DAVIS	1966	DONALD L. FINK