

Remembering *the District Branch* BY DR EARL HARDIN

Gabrielle has asked me to recall my participation in the District Branch. There was a uniqueness about this organization so I have many pleasant memories. As well, it was another dimension connecting with the larger American Psychiatric Association which had been a staple in my professional life from the beginning.

When John Hackett began approaching us about forming the District Branch I wondered what we needed it for since we were already quite involved with the BC Section of Psychiatry (now called the BC Psychiatric Association) and the Canadian, as well as UBC and hospital departments. Soon I'd learn what I needed it for.

As it turned out, the District Branch was a smaller, more intimate group. For example, John had recruited almost all the psychiatrists in Victoria and they were a delightful bunch. The Section now had hundreds of members and had lost its aura of camaraderie. The meetings held in Victoria were particularly enjoyable. In due time, as younger colleagues joined in, I got to meet very worthwhile and wonderful people I wouldn't have encountered otherwise.

Most of my training had been in the U.S., in the Menninger program. So from the start I was going to the APA Annual Meetings, and continued to attend the majority of these meetings for the rest of my career. Both the APA president and clinical director ordinarily attended the CPA Annual Meetings and were particularly friendly once we had a District Branch here. One of the highlights of my life was being flown to Washington DC in advance of becoming president of the District Branch in 1976, and getting such a warm welcome, particularly since I had already met some of the ranking officers. The head office functions were fascinating.

As far as responsibilities in the District Branch, truth be told, it was a free ride. John and his wife Sheila did it all. I did have a say in guest speakers to be invited. One I recruited was a young Jeffrey Lieberman who would eventually become APA president, and authored the book *Shrinks—The Untold Story of Psychiatry*.

Ultimately, Gabrielle came on board as the Executive Director and has carried the load ever since.

Since I was already attending APA Annual Meetings as my main educational exercise the District Branch cocktail parties were an added incentive, especially when it was our turn every three years to organize it.

Although I'd given thought to stepping forward for positions representing our Branch in the bigger APA and continuing with the CPA Board, too, it made more sense to give up the requisite travelling which did not involve my wife, and what plentiful, marvelous vacations Rosalee and I had as a result.

Accordingly, that left opportunities just for activities here, principally the role of helping deserving members attain Fellowship status (later it was known as Distinguished Fellowship). At first the late Lois Fuller shared the process with me, and I thanked her plenty for ferreting out the mysterious rating system used on ten categories on which decisions were made. Sadly, Lois succumbed to illness.

Gradually, my Elide Volpiana, the irrepressible secretary to my office mate Bill Brown and myself for 27 years, and I worked out a system. We would squeeze information from APA head office about who was newly eligible for consideration, which included eight years of membership, and would write everyone with potential at least a couple times before giving up. Whomever would come forward would get our coaching about steps to take. If someone did not know three Fellows to provide reference letters I would do one and get someone else to kick in, as well. Only in this way did I learn about some of the remarkable accomplishments of some of our colleagues. Really, while I was given credit for doing this, Elide deserves credit even more. It ultimately was turned over to Gabrielle's initiatives. One year Jon Fleming and I rejoined the process, and it was like old times.

My other local participation event was as Chair of the 1986 CPA Annual Meeting organizing committee, which had the byproduct

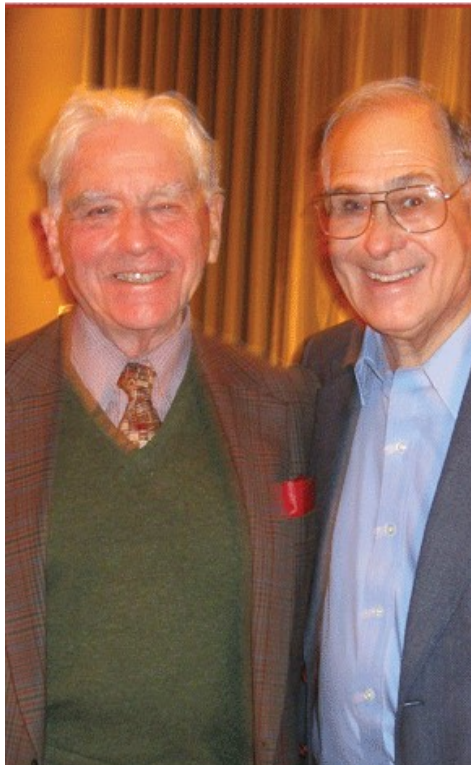
of personally hosting the visiting APA president and Clinical Director.

Being active in the District Branch added texture to my relationship with long-standing colleagues like Mike Myers and Jon Fleming, and my old buddy Fran Richards in Victoria, but also facilitated acquaintanceships with the up-and-coming Elisabeth Drance, Elisabeth Zoffmann, Colleen Northcott, Andrzej Koczapski, Ram Randhawa, and others who I would not have gotten to know otherwise.

All in all, I was very fortunate to have the District Branch and the APA as an integral part of my professional life.

~Dr Earl Hardin

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**WCDB founding president Dr John Hackett with Dr Earl Hardin
The two most relaxed presenters at Resident Research Night
October 30 2008 | Terminal City Club, Vancouver**