



T A P A
 TENNESSEE ACADEMY OF
 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

PA Pulse

The heartbeat of TAPA

Bridging the Future of Healthcare

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Mission - TAPA’s mission is to promote accessible, quality healthcare, and to advance the education, profession and practice of physician assistants in Tennessee.

Vision

Protecting and empowering the practice of physician assistants in Tennessee.

From the President

It is hard to believe that the year is coming to a close and the legislative session is right around the corner. I hope that each of you have reached out to your state senator and representative to get to know them. If you haven't, it is not too late! Send them an email this week, introduce yourself, and offer to be a resource to them if they have any questions about PA practice or healthcare in general.

TAPA has been working hard on your behalf this last quarter. We had a really great meeting with Speaker of the House Cameron Sexton (R-Crossville) when he came to speak at TAPA’s Legislative Luncheon at FallFest. We continue to meet with key legislators to press our case for modernizing the PA practice act in our state, and we’ve been spending down our PAC fund to support those legislators and candidates who support PAs – campaigns are expensive to run, and many legislators spent down their war chests this year. So the contributions have been noticed and appreciated.

There has also been movement on the national front with regards to the profession’s name change. As announced earlier, TAPA has officially changed its name to the Tennessee Academy of Physician Associates, following the lead of the AAPA. However, the AAPA’s “sister organizations” – the NCCPA, ARC-PA, and PAEA – have been slow to adopt this new title. I joined with many other PAs across the country in an open letter to these organizations urging them to update their policies and titles to reflect the will of the AAPA’s House of Delegates.

Finally, be sure to put Feb. 22, 2023, on your calendar. That will be TAPA’s PA Day on the Hill, and we need a large turnout. Ask for the day off, come to Nashville, and join your colleagues in lobbying for change. Don’t sit on the sidelines and wait for “TAPA” to do the work, because “TAPA” is you, me, and each one of us practicing in the state.

Again, we have made great strides over the past year with regard to pushing our legislative agenda and remain hopeful that we will be able to get a bill across the finish line that advances the PA practice environment in Tennessee. I hope to see you at PA Day on the Hill to help us push our agenda!!

Greg Cain, PA-C
 TAPA President



Join us for Spring Fling in Memphis

By Mallory Briggs, TAPA Special Event and Conference Coordinator

TAPA is pleased to be travelling back to Memphis for Spring Fling 2023 on Friday, April 14 and Saturday, April 15. TAPA will present an agenda that has been planned to offer 25 CME credits on a variety of medical topics and provided in two formats. Live lectures will focus on new treatments, specialty topics and advanced topics. Ten hours of pre-recorded content can be viewed at your leisure and is planned to help review for the PANCE.

Spring Fling is sure to be another great conference. Join us at the centrally-located Hilton Memphis, the city's tallest hotel. If you live in the Memphis area, we hope to see you at the conference. If you haven't been to Memphis lately - you are missing out.



Famous food critic and host of "Good Eats" Alton Brown has called Memphis the best place in the country for food. With staples like the 109-year-old grease at Dyer's and the 24-hour Gibson's Donuts, who can blame him?

Memphis has great entertainment venues offering live music, a restaurant scene that will satisfy any foodie, and many cultural and historical venues like Graceland, in the top five home tours in the U.S., and the Civil Rights Museum that traces the civil rights movement from the 17th



century to the present. For animal lovers out there, the Memphis Zoo just announced they have two new endangered African penguin chicks and a sea lion that predicts the winner of the Liberty Bowl each year. Whatever your interests during your free time, Memphis has it.

Later this year, join us for FallFest in Gatlinburg Oct. 2-6, 2023, for our five-day conference! FallFest is being planned to offer a maximum of 54 credits, which includes SA-CME bonus credits awarded by the NCCPA for certified PAs, prerecorded content, and the optional workshops. There will be a full day of student track lectures and workshops, as well as the student Challenge Bowl on Monday Oct. 2.

In your free time, remember that the Great Smoky Mountains are filled



with adventure. Nicknamed the "Gateway to the Smokies", Gatlinburg is the perfect place to gather before hiking the trails and spending time in the great outdoors.

The city holds over 100 dining options: great steakhouses, barbecue restaurants, pizza parlors and even donuts, and more attractions than just the outdoors. Spend some of your free time in the many Ripley attractions, including the Gatlinburg Aquarium.

For more information, or to access registration materials, visit www.tnpa.com/spring-fling.

SAVE THE DATES!

Spring Fling
April 14-15, 2023
Hilton Memphis

FallFest
Oct. 2-6, 2023
Gatlinburg Convention Center

TAPA's Hall of Fame gains a new member

By Marie Patterson, PA-C, DHS, TAPA Vice President

At FallFest, I had the great honor to recognize the contributions of PA Gary Johnson and name him to TAPA's Hall of Fame. Gary has been a PA for 46 years and a TAPA member for 39 years. In fact, he was the third PA licensed in the state of Tennessee, which is reflected in his license number "3".

Prior to becoming a PA, Gary served as a hospital corpsman in the U.S. Navy in Vietnam and received the Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, and a Letter of Commendation. He went on to earn a master's degree from Vanderbilt University in Health Promotion and Education and a PA degree from the University of Iowa College.

Gary has practiced for 26 years at the Alvin C. York VA Hospital in Murfreesboro. He served as the program director for Trevecca Nazarene University's PA program for nine years and hired Dr. Mike Moredock - another legend in PA education - who lead that program for many years. Gary was also a charter member for the Committee on Physician Assistants for the state of Tennessee.

Gary is a great example of how to give back to the profession. He continues to mentor and educate PA students by being a small group leader for the Middle Tennessee State University PA students. The students value his expertise and appreciate his kind and patient nature. He always gives detailed feedback to the students for continued growth learning.



Award Ceremony honorees (from left to right) Deanna Barton, Marie Patterson, Gary Johnson, and TAPA President Greg Cain.

TAPA's awards program honors those who go above and beyond

By Katherine Pesut Moffat, TAPA Executive Director

On Monday, Oct. 3, TAPA members gathered at FallFest to recognize those individuals who go above and beyond to represent the profession, teach and mentor future PAs, and excel in their daily duties. Below is an overview of the awards presented this year.

PA of the Year

TAPA's 2022 PA of the Year is Marie Patterson, PA -C, DHS. Marie has worked as both a clinician and an educator. For many years, she staffed the student health center at MTSU. She moved into academics in 2017 when she helped establish the PA Program at Lipscomb University and served as both an assistant professor and the admissions director. In 2020, she was named the program director for the PA program at MTSU and started that program, which matriculated its first class in May of this year.

Marie has long been involved with TAPA. She served as the secretary of TAPA's Board of Directors from 2005-2009, and she is the current TAPA vice president. She was appointed by the governor to the Board of PAs (previously COPA) in 2018 and is currently that Board's chair.

She was one of TAPA's delegates to the AAPA House of Delegates in 2019 and was recently elected to serve again in 2023 and 2024. She has taken a particular interest in state compact licensure for PAs and represented BoPA at the Compact Licensure Meeting with the Federation of State Medical Boards in 2019 and 2021.

Marie has been active with her church through mission work and also participated in a medical mission trip to Kenya in 2001. She is a regular fundraiser and team captain for the Special Kids race, all while raising eight children.

Marie has been a regular attendee of PA Day on the Hill and often goes out of her way to mentor students and attend their meetings with them. She has developed strong relationships with her state legislators, which has been beneficial to

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TAPA's legislative efforts. We are pleased to recognize all of her hard work done on behalf of TAPA, her students, and her PA colleagues!

PA Student of the Year - Deanna Barton

Deanna Barton, PA-S is TAPA's 2022 PA Student of the Year. A student at South College in Knoxville, she was nominated by her program director and clinical coordinator who spoke glowingly of her educational pursuits and leadership.

Deanna ranks first in her class as she nears the completion of the program. She consistently gets high marks from her clinical preceptors with continuous praise for her knowledge, compassion, personality, and initiative. One preceptor even described her as "the complete package" considering all her positive attributes.

Deanna has also logged more patient encounters in her clinical year than any other individual in her class. This is a testament to her work ethic and thoroughness in documentation, both of which are vital aspects to successful practice as a PA.

Deanna has also volunteered her time to give back to her student colleagues. She was a delegate to the AAPA's Assembly of Representatives that met this past May in Indianapolis, and she attended TAPA's PA Day on the Hill to help lobby for optimal team practice (OTP).

Deanna completed her required community service hours for graduation well ahead of time



Congratulations to South College - Knoxville, TAPA's 2022 Student Challenge Bowl Champions!

and continues to obtain more hours. In the process, she has chosen to serve her community in a variety of ways, including donating blood to the American Red Cross, providing first responder care at University of Tennessee football games, picking up trash along an adopted highway, and volunteering with Lost Sheep Ministries at Under the Bridge by providing medical care to homeless and underserved populations in downtown Knoxville. Congratulations Deanna!

Educator of the Year – Patrick Brown

TAPA's 2022 Educator of the Year is Patrick Brown. Nominated by his students, they noted that Patrick's desire for educating the future practitioner is demonstrated by his willingness and sacrifice to edify and further the PA profession.



2022 Educator of the Year Patrick Brown (left) and TAPA President Greg Cain.

Patrick graduated from Bethel University with a Master of Science in PA Studies in 2016, and he has been employed as an assistant professor with Bethel University's PA program since 2018. He provides instruction in the Clinical Medicine course, which is the keystone of the didactic year, and serves as its primary instructor. His teaching and dedication to the students far exceed the standards of modeled teaching behaviors and embodies the nature of the educator.

Patrick's enthusiasm for education is displayed outside the classroom as well. Patrick serves as the advisor to Bethel's Challenge Bowl Team. He provides additional training sessions to improve

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team knowledge, team cohesion, and team outcomes and his teams have enjoyed much success!

As a member of TAPA's Board of Directors and a frequent attendee at PA Day on the Hill, Patrick models leadership and service to others to his students. We are pleased to recognize his hard work and dedication to his students!

PA/Physician Team of the Year - Dr. Belt/Dr. Kitsteiner/PA Bailey Jessee

This year's PA/Physician Team of the Year is made up of one PA and two physicians. PA Bailey Jessee, Dr. Randall Belt, and Dr. John Kitsteiner work together at Greenville Community Hospital East in the emergency department.

Both Dr. Belt and Dr. Kitsteiner serve as adjunct instructors and preceptors for the Milligan University PA Program where they provide excellent instruction for our students, including PA Jessee when he was a student. In fact, Dr. Belt was the Milligan University PA Program Preceptor of the Year in 2021.

Upon PA Jessee's graduation, he began working with them in the emergency room and has done so for the past year. He has been influenced by Dr. Belt and Dr. Kitsteiner in his desire to teach and evaluate students and has been helping Milligan's program as an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) evaluator.

Although this team has only worked together in the clinical setting for one year, both Dr. Belt and Dr. Kitsteiner worked with PA Jessee during his time as a student and have had a strong influence on his PA training. They are an exemplary example of team-based healthcare!

Tennessee PA Foundation Report

By Frank Warren, Foundation Treasurer

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and recognize our 2022 Foundation Scholarship recipients once again. Scholarships were awarded during the Annual TAPA Awards Recognition Ceremony at FallFest on Oct. 3rd. For those who were not in attendance at the

conference, a total of \$5,000 in scholarships were awarded to eight PA students representing five different PA programs in Tennessee.

Below are our scholarship recipients who submitted worthy applications reviewed by the TAPA Board of Directors and awarded based on past achievements, extracurricular activities, GPA, future goals and financial need.

The recipients of the JC Carey Memorial Scholarships were as follows:

Ashley Whittaker from the Bethel PA Program received a \$250 scholarship. She previously earned a Bachelor of Science from Austin Peay University. She has a great interest in Tennessee legislation and is currently her class's AAPA representative and was previously in the APSU Student Government for three years, serving as the Chief Justice in her senior year. She looks forward to graduating and working in a nonprofit clinic near her hometown, serving as a preceptor to other PA students, and continuing to work legislatively through TAPA and wherever she is able.

Hannah Shoffner is attending the Lipscomb PA program and also received a \$250 scholarship. She has a Bachelor of Science from Middle Tennessee State University. She has been an active fundraiser/walk participant for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention since 2015. Her career goals, in addition to working in the psychiatric field, are to "help lessen the burden on patients seeking mental health care, increase education on how to care for acute mental health patients in the hospital, and provide the access to resources or awareness of resources available to hospital staff."

Mark Blackmon from the Trevecca Nazarene University PA program has a Bachelor of Science from Middle Tennessee State University, and he also received a \$250 scholarship. He is the MTSU PA Class Chaplain. He hopes to work in a hospital environment and looks forward to "the close team dynamics that result from having so many specialists in one setting" and broadening his continual educational experience beyond graduation.

Molly Valentine is attending the Middle Tennessee State University PA Program and

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received a \$750 scholarship. She has bachelor and master's degrees from the University of North Georgia. She also has an Associate of Science from Georgia State University, a Medical Physiology certificate from the University of Florida, and a Health Science and Healthcare Management certificate from Nashville State Community College.

She has been an adjunct instructor, community education, and group fitness leader for 11 years. She feels the "innate responsibility to lift up others around me" and looks forward as a PA to work in rural underserved communities, probably in primary care.

Rachel Lydy is attending Trevecca Nazarene's PA program and also received a \$750 scholarship. She is a graduate of The Ohio State University, Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Health and Rehabilitation Science. She also graduated from North Central State College with an Associate of Applied Science, majoring in Physical Therapy Assistant. She was a volunteer at the American Red Cross and Ohio Health Shelby Hospital.

Her experiences of growing up in rural Ohio with a large Amish and Mennonite community and close family experiences of serious disease have helped determine her goals and will help "shape and mold" her into a "caring, knowledgeable and skilled physician associate." She looks forward to ultimately representing the PA profession "in a positive light by pursuing excellence, honor, respect and altruism in everything I do". She hopes to work in an underserved community.



Foundation Treasurer Frank Warren presented Foundation scholarships at FallFest. From left to right: Molly Valentine, Maranda Vecchio, Rachel Lydy, and Mark Blackmon.

Casandra Mihalko is our final recipient of a JC Carey Memorial Scholarship and is attending the Bethel University PA program. She also received a \$750 scholarship. She is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Biochemistry. She is a Red Cross volunteer.

She has studied abroad and learned Spanish in her undergraduate training and seeks to serve the Hispanic community in family medicine due to the disparity of care here in Middle Tennessee for this growing group of people. She also cares for and inspires her three younger siblings. "As a woman of Christian faith, I have been immensely blessed with the opportunity to attend school and better my life and the future of my family."

The Foundation would also like to recognize the two recipients of the James Montag, Jr Military Service Scholarship for PAs:

Brianna Roberts is attending the South College-Knoxville PA program and received a \$500 scholarship. She has previously received degrees from the George Washington University with an A.S. in Health Science Laboratory Technology, and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke with a Bachelor of Science in Pre-health Professions. Before PA school, Brianna was an active-duty U.S. Army soldier training and working as a medical technician at Womack Army Medical Center and Landstuhl Medical Center. "As a veteran, I have a passion for caring for fellow veterans." Her lifelong goal is to "have a leadership position within the Department of Veteran Affairs so that I can be a veteran meeting the unique health needs of the veteran population." She also hopes to become a professor to teach and mentor aspiring PAs after completing a DMS bridge program. She is the first person in her family to pursue becoming a medical healthcare provider.

Maranda Vecchio is also a recipient of the James Montag Jr. Military Service PA Scholarship, receiving a \$1,500 scholarship. Maranda is attending Middle Tennessee State University's PA Program. She is a previous graduate of East Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Science, and she also earned an Associate of Science degree from Fortis Institute. Maranda served as member and team leader of the 42nd Aero-medical Dental Squadron in the U.S. Air

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Force for five years where she discovered her passion for the healthcare profession. "I believe that all people, regardless of their socio-economic status, deserve medical providers who offer high quality, professional and compassionate care." She spoke of discipline and sacrifice by herself and her husband as a military family and "hard work and dedication putting you on the path to reach your goals" to be an example to her daughter that she too can do anything.

Thank you to all our past year contributors who have helped these deserving students move forward with their education and training. I would like to express my particular gratitude to some who year in and year out continue to be major supporters of the Foundation.

Thank you to Jim Montag for funding the James Montag Jr Military Service Scholarship for many years now. And special thanks to Ed Wise, who as one of our most dedicated, long serving and respected PAs in the state of Tennessee, for quietly being a major yearly contributor to the Foundation in addition to passing his knowledge on to so many future PAs in Knoxville.

Finally, to Melissa Watson, who also quietly makes monthly contributions for many years now also and as fellow PA and friend makes a difference in more ways than most and even she realizes. There are many others who make one time or monthly donations and help make these scholarships available, but I wanted to highlight these three because they have been dependable, steady donors over the years, working members of TAPA, and attendees of TAPA conferences. Being a PA for me has been greatly enhanced in counting them as fellow PAs and friends along with many others not mentioned here.

I would encourage all PAs, but especially our younger PAs, to become involved with TAPA, its conferences, regional dinners and meetings because the learning, networking and friendships gained will change the trajectory of your career and future and make it much more rewarding.

I hope everyone has a blessed and healthy 2023 and hope as you are all blessed you will consider making a yearly or monthly contributions to the Tennessee PA Foundation which can be set up as automatic payments through the TAPA office. The benefit to you may be a tax deduction as the

Foundation is a 501©3 charitable organization recognized by the IRS, or it may be the satisfaction of serving and giving to the needs of others. The benefits to the students who receive these scholarships will come in the life of their careers to their patients and their families because someone made a difference at the right time in their education.

Thank you all for what you do as a PA and citizen in your communities.

TAPA PAC Contributors

(as of 12/31/2022)

Thank you to the many PAs and students who donated to TAPA's PAC this year. Your contributions are investments in the future of your profession!

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contributing \$250+

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*Greg Cain
Eric Elliot
*Richard Heintl
*David Lennon
*Sarah McQueen
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*James Montag, Jr.
*Johnny Nowlin
*David Roberts
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