

Fifty years is a long time, and putting a half-century into words is no small task. Unfortunately, there wasn't always a scribe jotting notes or a photographer snapping shots at important events along the way. What we have are bits and pieces from past presidents that have been collected, assembled, and presented to the best of our ability. It does not fit perfectly together like a new desk from IKEA; it is more like that old tent you bought at your neighbor's garage sale. Some pieces are broken, others are missing altogether, and the finished product doesn't look exactly like the picture on the box; but it's close enough. The same is true with this history of the Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society. Some pieces have inevitably been left out, and the pieces we do have may not fit entirely together, but it's not too far from the truth. Without further adieu: the history of POS.

The year was 1956. Elvis Presley was gyrating his way up the charts with songs like "Love Me Tender" and "Don't Be Cruel", becoming the first true American Idol. Mickey Mantle was hitting homeruns out of Yankee stadium with ease as the Bronx Bombers edged the Brooklyn Dodgers in the inaugural Subway Series. Dick Clark debuted as host of American Bandstand on ABC while The Price is Right premiered on CBS (unfortunately Bob Barker wouldn't come on board until 1972). The "In God We Trust" motto that adorns U.S. currency was authorized and the nation elected President Eisenhower for a second term. And while public schools in Louisville, Kentucky integrated for the first time, the United States began testing hydrogen bombs in the Pacific.

Indeed, 1956 saw a lot of firsts, and while so much was happening on a national level, exciting things were happening in Pennsylvania as well. Not the least of which was the inception of the Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society. While technological advancements and medical breakthroughs were making the practice of orthopaedic surgery a dynamic profession, two independent groups of physicians saw the need for an organization to meet these challenges head on. The first was the Hanlon Society, formed on April 24, 1954, in honor of Clement R. Hanlon, MD. Dan R. Baker, MD, presided over the initial meeting in Sayre, Pennsylvania, and original membership consisted of seventeen orthopaedic surgeons, including Drs. Baker, Leonard F. Bush, Frank Costello, Edgar L. Ralston, Victor B. Vare, and Richard White.

While the Hanlon Society was forging ahead in northeastern Pennsylvania, two men were tackling the same issues in State College. Albert B. Ferguson Jr., MD, initiated discussions with John Gartland, MD, about the creation of a group devoted to scientific and academic progress in the field of orthopaedics.

What both young organizations had in common was a passion for their profession and a drive to ensure Pennsylvania had the best medical care in the country. In 1956, the groups merged and the Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society was born. White sent the invitational letter, succinctly stating: "It is desired to bring up and discuss current problems which one meets in the everyday practice of orthopaedic surgery."

White and Ferguson made good on their word and the inaugural meeting was held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on October 12, 1956. The fledgling group of dedicated physicians chose a location with little distraction so they could focus on the clinical talks given by fellow orthopaedic surgeons and begin to discuss the legal implications of practicing in their state.

For the next several years, POS was just a few clusters of surgeons scattered across the state: eight from Pittsburgh, twelve from Philadelphia, and one from Harrisburg. They decided to meet once a year, and fittingly, the meeting would be held in Pennsylvania, (or at least not in a city with 24-hour casinos), and a new president would be elected every other year. Although small, the organization created a name for itself, attracting the best physicians in the state, and by 1975 it was 100 members strong. (Like most things from the sixties, the POS records are a bit hazy from that time period).

When bellbottoms and disco replaced poodle skirts and beetle-bop, the Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society started to address mounting medical and legal issues. From 1973-1975, a World War II veteran sat as president. Zachary B. Friedenberg, MD, served with the 95th Evacuation Hospital in North Africa, France, and Italy, and was named to the AAOS Legacy of Heroes for his accomplishments. In 1976, during the term of Martin L. Beller, MD, the country experienced its first malpractice crisis, a problem that would affect not just orthopaedics, but doctors of all specialties. Payouts increased to exorbitant levels, insurance premiums

skyrocketed, and California's MICRA law was passed. PA's CAT fund was developed and the problems it created have yet to be resolved.

Before the decade came to a close, the Society developed its logo and seal, a symbol still viewed as the mark of orthopaedic excellence. Marvin Steinberg, MD, served as president from 1978-1979, and instituted a second annual meeting to be held in the spring. This meeting would be conducted out of state to garner interest and give members and excuse to wear that Hawaiian shirt in the back of their closet. In 1978, the first spring meeting was held in Bermuda, and an anonymous source reported that the Bermuda Rum Swizzle was the beverage of choice.

By 1982, Pennsylvania had over 300 orthopaedic surgeons, but fewer than half belonged to the Society, and only 25 attended the annual meetings. To increase participation, Thomas Howard, MD, rotated the fall meeting between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, and in July 1983, Carl Stanitski, MD, wrote the inaugural "President's Message" in the first POS newsletter, helping to spread the Society's ideas and accomplishments across the state. President Henry H. Sherk, MD, continued to focus on increasing membership in 1984, and his efforts soon paid off as the fall meeting alone saw the addition of 33 new members.

In 1986, POS set a precedent among state societies by including residents in their membership. Talented surgeons graduated from an array of renowned Pennsylvania medical institutions every year, and under the leadership of Peter Keblish, MD, the Society made resident retention a major goal, something it still focuses on today.

The late 1980s was a time of action for the Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society. The spring meeting in 1988 was held in conjunction with the New Jersey and New York Orthopaedic Societies thanks to David Grant, MD, and in 1989, under Murray R. Glickman, MD, the organization took a political stance as physicians began lobbying for themselves. Glickman also crafted the bylaws that the Society uses today. But maybe the most sweeping change came from Edward Resnick, MD, who proposed a new rule at the spring meeting in Arizona in 1990: "Nobody, but nobody will be allowed to wear a necktie during the entire meeting." Although bowties were acceptable. It is one decree that struck a chord with many members, particularly Stephen Bosacco, MD, who has become a fashion icon, bringing together styles that defy convention, aestheticism, and often logic.

The Gulf War hit close to home in 1991 when the president at the time, Richard Whittaker, MD, was called to active duty in the Middle East. This didn't stop the Society from moving forward under Tom Malin, MD, whose fall meeting eclipsed 100 attendees, the most to date, and Whittaker did manage to call in to the board meeting from Saudi Arabia to a thunderous applause. In 1992, Malin took a significant step to solidify POS as a political player by creating the OrthoPAC, naming Lewis S. Sharps, MD, chairman. Malin didn't know it at the time, but apparently the position carries with it a lifetime term.

With the advent of the OrthoPAC and a steady rise in membership during the mid-nineties, POS established itself not just as a leader in the clinical arena, but in the legislative arena as well. The scientific meetings continued to flourish as more and more members attended not just for education but to build friendship with their colleagues. President Arnold Berman, MD, saw Act 44 pass the General Assembly during his term, which led to major reductions in workers' compensation fees to providees—the infamous 113% of 1994 Medicare, now 171%. In 1994, POS had its first legislative victory under Harry Rubash, MD, helping to stop direct access to physical therapy. The following year, under the leadership of Freddie Fu, MD, the board of directors voted to establish a full-time executive director position in order to better serve the membership and advance the Society's objectives. In 1996, POS hired Hawkins Associates to take its political agenda to the next level. That year E. Michael Okin, MD, led the Society in a Tort Reform Rally for Change in Harrisburg, and with its new lobbying firm, POS created a political strategy to address the growing CAT fund and medical liability crisis, as well as workers' compensation and insurance reform. POS also acquired its first email account that year, making pertinent information readily available to its members with a simple click.

The technological advancements continued for POS as it approached Y2K. With Christopher Harner, MD, at the helm, the Society crafted the mission statement that it uses today, and in 1998, www.paorthosociety.org was activated, linking POS to the global community as well as creating an easily accessible database and a means of

interaction within the organization. In 1999 with the guidance of John D. Kelly IV, MD, and the board of directors, the Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society separated from the Pennsylvania Medical Society. Executive Director, Kathy DeWittie moved the operation to the State Street Building in Harrisburg, directly across the street from the Capitol. With its prominent location and growing staff dedicated to its members, POS could enter the new millennium with confidence and enthusiasm.

In 2000, Lewis S. Sharps, MD, took the reins, bringing his experience and knowledge of the political system to the table. He would become a key figure not just during his presidency, but up to and including today. At the same time, Dr. Okin, brought orthopedics to the public eye, working with Governor Tom Ridge to make November 2000 "Bone and Joint Month" in Pennsylvania. Bruce Vanett, MD, initiated a public relations campaign in 2001, raising \$325,000 for the cause, the biggest single-year fundraising campaign in POS history. It came at a critical juncture as the malpractice crisis peaked in December of that year, resulting in the temporary closing of Abington Memorial Hospital's emergency room. In 2002, Jeffrey Baum, MD, led POS in its pursuit of medical liability reform, helping convince the legislature to pass Act 13, and the Society sued Independence Blue Cross, making a firm statement to the membership as well as the medical community. That same year, POS hired PR Specialist Rosemary Wuenschel to push forward its public relations agenda.

Malpractice rates continued to soar over the next few years and in 2003, president Paul Burton, DO, moved to California as a direct result. Vice president Richard G. Schmidt, MD, took over, accomplishing a lot in his nearly two-year term. In 2003, Schmidt led POS at a rally in Love Park for medical liability reform. Working with Jonathan Bigley, POS proposed a strategy to cut the escalating frivolous lawsuit expenses in the state. The General Assembly and Governor Ed Rendell approved the legislation and Pennsylvania raised taxes on cigarettes, using that income to subsidize medical liability expense. This subsidy came in the form of 100% MCARE abatement for orthopaedic surgeons, as well as all other high-risk specialists, not just in 2003, but up to and including 2007. With a new fervor among the Pennsylvania physician and patient communities, the Society created a sister organization of high risk specialists called 3PSC, or Pennsylvania Physicians for the Protection of Specialty Care, in 2004. The group was headed by Charles D. Hummer III, MD, and executive director Kathy DeWittie, giving the leadership of POS to its current executive director Beth Weachter. The goal of 3PSC was to unite those most affected by the malpractice crisis into a coalition, forming a collective voice for the cause which POS had been fighting for the past several years. The organization is well on its way.

With the issues still looming in 2005, P. Christopher Metzger, MD, was named president, and POS stayed the course, continuing to focus on academic progress as well as political involvement. The organization took a major step in this direction with the creation of the Leadership Circle. Under the tutelage of Dr. Sharps, POS developed the group to focus their attention and resources on the key leaders in the Capitol. The strategy worked tremendously as Pennsylvania physicians received full MCARE abatement once again and helped convince Insurance Commissioner Diane Koken to keep insurance limits at their current level. POS hired a new lobbying firm in March of that year, placing its confidence in Jonathan Bigley and his new outfit, Bigley & Blikle, LLC.

2006 marks the 50th Anniversary of the Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society, and to usher in this momentous year, the group needed someone unafraid of the limelight. Joshua Port, MD, fit the bill. Port has been one of the most active presidents to date, making monthly legislative visits to Harrisburg and serving as a member of the MCARE Commission, which is designed to find the permanent solution to the MCARE dilemma. Harkening back to the first meeting in 1956, he held the spring scientific meeting in the Bahamas, a mundane location where it would be easy to focus on academic sessions, and not beautiful beaches, snorkeling excursions, and coincidentally, a twenty-four hour casino. Truly, the Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society has come full circle.

The future looks bright for the POS. As our anniversary motto attests, we are growing stronger: in membership, medical prowess, and political influence. One thing the Society has always been able to count on is its loyal members and dedicated Board of Directors. Without fanfare, this group of individuals has consistently provided a solid foundation from which to build and maintain a successful organization. And the future will be no different. 2007 will see Dr. Hummer assume leadership, and as past president of 3PSC and co-chair of the OrthoPAC, he is well-groomed to lead the POS into the next fifty years.