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## 1996 Honorable Mention Papers by Fellows in the AAFS Psychiatry and Behavioral Science Section

The year 1996 marked the twentieth anniversary of one of the most important projects in forensic psychiatry, the creation in 1976 of the American Board of Forensic Psychiatry, Inc. (ABFP). Many forensic psychiatrists are not aware of the fact that the ABFP was initially solely sponsored by the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. Similarly, most practitioners do not know that the leadership for creating the ABFP came from a forensic psychiatrist, former AAFS President, Maier I. Tuchler, M.D. The ABFP provided a method for distinguishing between those who merely asserted their competence in forensic psychiatry and those who successfully demonstrated their competence in the field.

There was controversy regarding the American Board of Forensic Psychiatry. Some practitioners feared that Board certification would foster elitism within forensic psychiatry organizations and detract from such organizations' educational missions. The other major professional society of forensic psychiatrists, the American Academy of Psychiatry & the Law (AAPL), only agreed to participate as the second sponsor of the ABFP when it became clear that AAFS would proceed regardless of whether or not AAPL supported to project. Initial funding for the ABFP came from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) through a grant application made by the Forensic Sciences Foundation.

The initial directors of the American Board of Forensic Psychiatry were Walter Bromberg, M.D., Bernard Diamond, M.D., Zigmond Lebensohn, M.D., Herbert Modlin, M.D., Joseph Paterson, D. Crim., Irwin Perr, M.D., J.D., Seymour Pollack, M.D., Stanley Portnow, M.D., Jonas Rapoport, M.D., Robert Sadoff, M.D., John Torrens, M.D., and Maier Tuchler, M.D. To avoid charges of "grandfathering," the initial directors examined each other, so that no unexamined candidate was ever certified by the ABFP. Subsequently, certification required a review of the applicants' credentials to establish eligibility to be examined, e.g., only persons certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology, Inc. (ABPN) were permitted to take the examinations. Certification required passing both a written examination and an oral examination.

Because the new ABPN examination for Added Qualifications in Forensic Psychiatry does not include an oral component, it may be of interest to the new generation of forensic psychiatrists to know why the oral examination was considered the "heart" of the ABFP examination. The oral test included three sections. The first

section included a videotape presentation of a forensic psychiatric interview and subsequent discussion of the case with the candidate. The second included three written case reports, selected by the candidate from his/her own best work in criminal and civil forensic psychiatry, and discussion of those case reports with the candidate. The third section was a discussion with the candidate of major topics in forensic psychiatry. The ABFP oral examination tested practical skills required of all forensic psychiatrists in the real world, e.g., the ability to apply clinical findings to legal criteria, the ability to present one's ideas in a logical and persuasive manner, the ability cogently to defend one's written work products, the ability to "think on one's feet" and parry difficult questions. It was usual for a substantial portion of persons who passed the written examination to be unable to pass the oral examination.

The ABFP certified over 200 forensic psychiatrists during its years in operation. It voluntarily ceased to do business in order to make way for its successor, the examination for Added Qualifications in Forensic Psychiatry of the American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology, Inc. Following the example of the ABFP, the initial members of the ABPN's Committee on Added Qualifications in Forensic Psychiatry were all formally examined in a multi-essay test, in order to establish their own qualifications for the new certification. The ABPN first offered its new certifying examination in 1994. Unlike the ABFP, and despite the recommendation of its own Committee on Added Qualifications in Forensic Psychiatry, the ABPN's examination for Added Qualifications in Forensic Psychiatry consists only of a written examination. The ABPN believed that it was not practical to require an oral examination because (1) it would be too costly, (2) it would be too difficult to score objectively, (3) there would be too few oral examiners to test the large number of candidates expected to apply for certification, (4) oral examinations were not required in the other new tests for Added Qualifications in Geriatric Psychiatry and Addiction Psychiatry, and (4) the skills tested on oral examinations were more properly evaluated in the course of a Fifth Post-Graduate Year residency in forensic psychiatry.

The AAFS Psychiatry & Behavioral Science Section is pleased to mark the 20th anniversary of the birth of the American Board of Forensic Psychiatry, Inc. with the presentation of the following two papers, each a recipient of Honorable Mention in the 1996 contest for the best paper by a fellow in forensic psychiatry or forensic psychology. The first is by Adam M. Weisman, Ph.D., *Forensic Analysis and Psycholegal Implications of Parricide and Attempted Parricide*. The second is by Tracy Gunter-Justice, M.D., *Who Does the Family Court Refer for Psychiatric Services*.

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Received 7 April 1997, accepted 7 April 1997.