History of the New Jersey Section, AACC

At the 1969 national meeting of the American Association of Clinical Chemists in Denver, a group of clinical chemists from New Jersey informally discussed the possibility of forming a new section. The subject came up repeatedly during the course of the meetings and the idea seemed to become more attractive as time passed.

In October of 1969, I sent a letter to David A. H. Roethel, then Executive Director of the AACC, informing him of our intention to form the Section, and that we wanted a temporary charter. There were 15 sponsors. A series of organizational meetings were held in New Jersey in order to map strategy, to recruit the required number of members necessary to petition for the formation of a new section, and to draft a constitution. Between the months of October and December 1969, a slate of officers was selected. The officers were: Herbert E. Spiegel, President, Norman Kleinman, Vice President, and James Hamm, Treasurer-Secretary. During this time, delicate negotiations were being held between the Executive Committees of the New York Metropolitan and Philadelphia Sections to agree on borders for the proposed section. Concurrent with these activities, the newly elected president and officers began moving toward incorporating the section. The flurry of activity continued unabated, even though we were operating without a charter and, without it, the ultimate success of our activities was in doubt. David Roethel came to the rescue by sending us a provisional charter—we could continue. The question was, would we get a permanent charter at the July 1970 meeting in Buffalo? Without the final charter, there was no section. There was no turning back, so the officers proceeded as though the negotiations would be favorable. On January 30, 1970, an important letter was sent to me by Seymour Wisten, then chairman of the committee on local sections. The subject of that communication concerned one of the final obstacles to our section's formation—namely, its geographical limits. In part, the letter read:

This is to inform you that a meeting will be held on February 12, 1970, at the Public Health Laboratory of the City of New York, 455 First Avenue in Manhattan. The meeting will convene at approximately 11:00 a.m. We will meet in the lobby of the building and go to the assigned room.

The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the boundaries of the provisional New Jersey Section. In addition to your section, representatives of New York and Philadelphia will be present at this meeting.

The officers of our provisional section were both pleased and apprehensive because the result of this meeting could be an outright failure to grant sufficient boundaries to the section to provide enough members. There were some officers in the New York Metropolitan Section who wanted to retain the northern counties of New Jersey. In addition, there was talk that some of the southern counties of New Jersey might be retained by Philadelphia. We attended the meeting, which at times was spirited. The happy result of our efforts is contained in a follow-up communication from Seymour Wisten, dated February 13, 1970, which read in part:

Resolved: That the geographic limits of the proposed New Jersey Section be the state of New Jersey. New members or members of the Metropolitan New York or Philadelphia Section who reside or work in the aforementioned geographic area have the right or privilege of indicating their choice of section affiliation. I would greatly appreciate it if you would bring this resolution to the attention of the various executive committees of the three local sections, and as soon as possible inform me of the action of these executive committees on this resolution.

The three local sections soon concurred, and for all intents and purposes the section was a reality. Their vigor renewed, the officers of our section intensified their activities by appointing Dr. Robert Silber, Dr. Ernest Tucker, and Mr. George Wein as councilors. These three individuals would serve along with the previously elected officers as the Executive Committee. The period between January and February 1970 was also marked by the appointment of Dr. Paul Lenz as the first program chairman, and by the issuance of a Certificate of Incorporation, which permitted the section to apply to the Bureau of Internal Revenue for tax-exempt status. Over the course of these crucial months, a constitution for our section was drafted, with the Philadelphia section's constitution as a model. In June 1970, we were advised by David Roethel that our potential for membership was 72, and that we should have one representative to the council. However, since we were not technically a section, we were informed that

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1 Submitted at the request of the Committee on History, AACC.
we were not technically entitled to representation until formally chartered. Dr. George Lewis, Council Chairman, decided to take the matter of approval of our charter before the Council very early in the Council's agenda. Our charter was approved on July 22, 1970, and we were represented for the remainder of that Council's session.

Since the time of our charter, our programs have grown, our membership has increased to over 180 members, and we have received our own 501-C3 tax exemption. Amid the happiest of times, there is invariably some sadness. A year and a half after our charter, Dr. Bernard F. Gerulat, one of the charter members, and one of the strongest supporters of our section, died at the age of 42. Our Executive Committee decided to create an award in his honor for those individuals who have advanced the charter purposes of the AACC. The awardees have been:

Dr. Herbert E. Spiegel 1972
Dr. Robert Silber 1973
Mr. George Wein 1974
Dr. Arthur Babson 1975
Dr. Martin Rubin 1976

Our section also decided to create a Certificate of Honor as a recognition for outstanding services to the AACC. The awardees have been:

Dr. Kurt Dubowski 1974
Dr. Jocelyn Hicks 1975
Dr. Richard Henry 1976

Finally, we have created an award for outstanding services to this section, which was presented to Dr. Paul Lenz in 1976.

Since its formation, the New Jersey section has promoted continuing education as one of its prime endeavors. In addition to regularly scheduled scientific meetings, the section has sponsored the following seminars and workshops:

Basic Elements of Instrumentation. October 1971.
Clinical Toxicology Workshop. May 1972.
Course in Radioimmunoassay. February–April 1974.

The section continues to grow and prosper with a dedicated cadre of people. The vigor and vitality of the group prompts us to look to the future with pride and confidence.

Herbert E. Spiegel

Research Division
Hoffmann-La Roche, Inc.
Nutley, N. J. 07110