

*SPECIAL SECTION*

**In Celebration Of The**

**25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

**of the**

**Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs**

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## ***SPECIAL SECTION OVERVIEW***

### ***Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of The APA Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (OEMA)***

Twenty-five years ago, in 1979, the APA Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (OEMA) was established. The establishment of OEMA can be most directly traced to a recommendation of the 1978 Dulles Conference on *Expanding the roles of culturally diverse peoples in the profession of psychology*, which was convened (with the leadership of Dalmas Taylor, PhD) by the APA Board of Directors, the APA Board for Social and Ethical Responsibility, and the National Institute of Mental Health. OEMA's establishment marked the initiation of a commitment by organized U.S. psychology to provide both staff and infrastructure for efforts related to ethnic minority issues and concerns. OEMA's first Director was Esteban Olmedo, PhD.

As its current Director, I am honored to have the opportunity to preside over OEMA'S 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This Special Section of the *Communique* is the first of several efforts that will commemorate this anniversary and the many noteworthy and historic efforts that have been championed by OEMA, its staff, and its constituents.

In this Special Section, we present a timeline of OEMA's major activities during the past 25 years. We also present recollections of each of OEMA's past Directors regarding some of the most memorable activities and events during his/her tenure. Then we present a perspective of OEMA's possible future challenges as envisioned by the current Chair of the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students' (APAGS) Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs.

We hope you will join us in celebrating the first 25 years of OEMA. Perhaps -- with a bit of luck and a lot of continued good works that meet needs and address issues that otherwise would often go unrecognized -- 25 years from now, OEMA might achieve the status a local reporter recently conferred upon the Salvation Army in trying to explain why that organization was a recent beneficiary of a \$1.5 billion dollar bequest: "It's an anachronism that just keeps on working"!!

— ***Bertha G. Holliday, PhD***

***Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs'***  
**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Timeline of Its Efforts**  
**to Advance Ethnic Minorities in Psychology**

- 1978 National Conference for Increasing Roles of Culturally Diverse Peoples in Psychology (Dulles Conference) reiterates the need for an APA office dedicated to minority affairs
- 1979 APA's Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs is established with Esteban Olmedo, PhD, as its director
- APA approves *Criteria for Accreditation of Doctoral Training Programs and Internships in Professional Psychology* including cultural and individual diversity as one of its criteria
- 1980 APA Board of Ethnic Minority Affairs (BEMA) is established
- 1981 APA reports results of first comprehensive study of ethnic minorities in psychology
- BEMA establishes Task Force on Minority Education and Ethnic Training
- 1984 Lillian Comas-Diaz, PhD, is appointed as OEMA Director
- BEMA establishes Task Force on Communication with Minority Constituents
- 1985 BEMA establishes Committee on Ethnic Minority Human Resources Development
- First edition of the *Directory of Ethnic Minority Professionals in Psychology* is published with Dr. Comas-Diaz as its editor
- 1986 APA Division 45 (Society for Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues) is established
- 1987 Christine I. Hall, PhD, is appointed as OEMA Director
- BEMA establishes Task Force on the Delivery of Services to Ethnic Minority Populations
- 1989 L. Philip Guzman, PhD, is appointed as OEMA Director

***Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs'***  
**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Timeline of Its Efforts**  
**to Advance Ethnic Minorities in Psychology**

- 1990 Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest (BAPPI) is established
- BEMA's Committee on Ethnic Minority Human Resources Development issues *The mental health of ethnic minorities: A selected bibliography*
- BEMA is sunset and in its stead the Committee of Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) is established
- APA publishes the *Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations*
- 1991 APA sponsors National Conference on Enhancing the Quality of Undergraduate Education in Psychology (St. Mary's Conference) with task group focused solely on ethnic minority issues
- 1992 Council of National Psychological Association for the Advancement of Ethnic Minorities Interests (CNPAEMI) is established and staffed by OEMA
- OEMA launches the *Communiqué*, a newsletter dedicated to "providing a voice to ethnic minority issues in psychology"
- APA's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* is revised to include a principle and ethical standards related to cultural and individual diversity
- CEMA renames its dissertation award the Jeffrey S. Tanaka Memorial Dissertation Award in Psychology for the most outstanding dissertation in psychology which addresses concerns relevant to populations of color
- APA's first miniconvention focused on ethnic minorities, "*Ethnic minorities: Issues and concerns for psychology, now and in the future*", is organized by Philip Guzman, PhD, as a part of APA's Centennial Convention
- 1993 OEMA in collaboration with the Psi Beta Honorary Society

## ***Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs'*** **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Timeline of Its Efforts** **to Advance Ethnic Minorities in Psychology**

- establishes Psi Beta Diversity Project 2000 (DP2K), to encourage ethnic minority students at community colleges to continue their training in psychology
- APA Council of Representatives adopts a resolution stating: “APA places high priority on issues related to the education of ethnic minorities.”
- CEMA, BAPPI and APA’s Board of Scientific Affairs (BSA) collaborate to establish a task force to examine the scientific conceptions of race
- 1994 Bertha G. Holliday, PhD, is appointed as OEMA Director
- Commission on Ethnic Minority Recruitment, Retention and Training in Psychology (CEMRRAT) is established by APA President Ronald Fox, PhD, and Richard Suinn, PhD, is appointed as CEMRRAT Chair
- DP2K hosts the first Diversity Project 2000 Summer Institute, a 4-day workshop, in Los Angeles
- OEMA and CEMA successfully advocate for the establishment of an APA ethnic minority legislative advocacy agenda and the hiring of ethnic minority staff in the APA Public Interest Public Policy Office
- 1995 CEMA (along with co-sponsors APA Office of Divisions Services and the APA Practice Directorate) hosts inaugural Invitational CEMA Breakfast, allowing State Psychological Associations and key APA personnel to network and discuss particular issues relevant to ethnic minorities and to the attendees
- CEMA collaborates with APA’s Public Policy Office to develop and present a congressional briefing entitled, The Affirmative Action Debate: Linking Research and Policy
- CEMA co-sponsors a convention session with APA Division 45 that focuses on the *Bell Curve* controversy
- 1996 National Institute of General Medical Science awards OEMA \$750K

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**to Advance Ethnic Minorities in Psychology**

	grant to begin the APA/NIGMS Project (in 2000, the NIGMS grant was renewed for \$1.43 million)
	OEMA conducts CEMA-authorized survey of the editorial pipeline experiences of APA's members of color
1997	OEMA and CEMA organize a miniconvention within the APA Convention on "Psychology and Racism"
	OEMA establishes APA's National Conversation on Psychology and Racism
1999	Richard M. Suinn Minority Achievement Award is established to honor graduate/professional psychology programs that excel in minority recruitment, retention and training
	APA CEO, Raymond Fowler, PhD, authorizes allocation of \$100,000 per year for implementation of CEMRRAT 5-year plan
	Percentage of ethnic minorities among APA members increases to 6.1%, up from 3.1% in 1978
	CEMRRAT2 Task Force is established, with staffing provided by OEMA, and charged to oversee the implementation of the CEMRRAT Plan
2000	OEMA establishes the Psychology in Ethnic Minority Serving Institutions (PEMSI) Initiative
	CEMRRAT2 Textbook Initiatives Work Group is established
	CNPAAEMI issues its <i>Guidelines for Research in Ethnic Minority Communities</i>

***Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs'***  
**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Timeline of Its Efforts**  
**to Advance Ethnic Minorities in Psychology**

	<p>CEMA and APA Division 45 collaborate to develop and successfully advocate for an APA Resolution on <i>Racial/Ethnic Profiling and Other Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Law and Security Enforcement Activities</i></p> <p>The APA State Leadership Conference's Diversity Delegates Initiative, which seeks to increase the participation of ethnic minorities in leadership of State Psychological Associations, is established by the APA Committee of State Leaders with monies provided by the APA CEMRRAT Implementation Grant Fund and the APA Practice Directorate</p> <p>CEMA and the APA Committee on International Relationships in Psychology (CIRP) successfully advocate for an APA <i>Resolution against racism and in support of the goals of the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism</i></p>
2002	<p>Norman B. Anderson, PhD is appointed APA's Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>OEMA, in collaboration with the APA Minority Fellowship Program and with funding provided by APA's Science Directorate, establishes the <i>Promoting psychological research and training on health disparities issues grants</i> program, which is targeted to early career faculty at ethnic minority-serving postsecondary institutions</p> <p>APA adopts its <i>Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists</i></p>
2003	<p>CEMA, along with PPO, initiates a Coordinated Advocacy Campaign to address the role of behavioral health in the <i>Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act</i></p>
2004	<p>CNPAAEMI issues brochure <i>Psychological Treatment of Ethnic Minority Populations</i></p> <p>OEMA celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 25 years of advances for ethnic minorities in Psychology</p>

## ***SPECIAL SECTION OEMA'S 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY***

### ***OEMA: The Beginning***

Esteban L. Olmedo, PhD



**Esteban Olmedo, PhD**

As I sit at my computer to write down my thoughts, I can't believe it has been 25 years! Congratulations OEMA! I also would like to express my deep appreciation to the many psychologists who, throughout the years, have taken time from their academic and professional endeavors to insure the success of this program. It has literally "changed the face of APA" and has provided a unique opportunity for ethnic minority psychologists to participate fully in the activities of the Association.

My first involvement with the process that led to the founding of OEMA was in 1977 when I was invited by **James Jones** to join the Steering Committee that was planning the now legendary "Dulles Conference". From the very beginning we set out to work in a spirit of cooperation both with APA as well as among the major ethnic groups that were to participate in the conference and the follow up actions. This was not a particularly easy task at the time . There were many issues of trust and memories of past failures that had to be addressed. In the end, we were able to organize a conference that had satisfactory representation and the full support of the APA.

*"From the very beginning we set out to work in a spirit of cooperation both with APA as well as among the major ethnic groups ... This was not a particularly easy task at the time."*

— Esteban L Olmedo, PhD

The "Dulles Conference" was convened in a facility near the Dulles Airport in May 1978 and included several dozen African American, American Indian/Alaska Natives, Asian American and Hispanic psychologists. Numerous senior APA officials also participated in the conference at various points. The main objective of the meeting was to develop a set of recommendations for structural and programmatic initiatives that would

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enhance the then very limited participation of ethnic minority psychologists in the affairs of the APA.

Many proposals were made regarding the possible structural changes that we would recommend. Would it be a new division? A committee? A board? A new program office at APA headquarters? Many tensions arose among the various ethnic groups and with APA officials. Intense negotiations took place with regard to levels of representation for each ethnic group and with respect to what was deemed “doable” within the political framework of the Association. In the end, the conferees agreed on a recommendation that the APA create a Board of Ethnic Minority Affairs and establish a new Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs to be housed at APA Headquarters. As it turned out, Division 45 was established a few years later.

The recommendations were presented to the APA Board of Directors at their June 1978 meeting. The Board recommended to the Council of Representatives that OEMA be established and that an Ad Hoc Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs be created to develop further proposals. These recommendations were overwhelmingly approved by the Council at its annual convention meeting in August 1978. That was the birth of OEMA!

I had been very much involved in the activities up to then. But when I was invited to apply for the position of Administrative Officer and head of OEMA, I was conflicted. On the one hand, I had my research program as a Research Psychologist and Associate Director of the Spanish Speaking Mental Health Research Center at UCLA. On the other hand, I had a deep commitment to the success of the Dulles Conference initiatives. Eventually, I decided that the latter was more important in the short term. I was then honored by being appointed to the position and assumed the responsibility in December 1978. What I originally thought would be two years, ended up being five and a half years of serving OEMA!

Those were exciting times. The first order of business for OEMA was to assist in the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee and support its meetings and activities. Most of my time was devoted to researching the history of minority issues and activities at APA, with particular focus on

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what had worked and what had not. These voluminous materials were presented to the Committee to facilitate its deliberations. My colleagues at the Central Office were incredibly helpful and made my “rookie year” a memorable experience.

After much deliberation and negotiation, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to support the Dulles Conference initiative and recommend once again that a Board of Ethnic Minority Affairs be created. This continued to be a controversial recommendation because it would require a vote of the APA membership to amend the bylaws of the Association. In the end, the Board of Directors recommended and the Council approved in August 1979 that a bylaws amendment be submitted to the membership to establish the Board of Ethnic Minority Affairs (BEMA). After much anxious expectation, the membership approved the measure that fall by the required two-thirds vote. BEMA was born!

The following years were busy ones for OEMA. Most of my time was devoted to supporting the activities of the new Board, drafting its operating policies and procedures, and helping coordinate the work of the Board with that of other boards and committees of the Association. This liaison work insured that the interests of ethnic minority communities were taken into consideration in all the activities of the Association.

Fittingly, among the Board’s first initiatives were the creation of task forces on Minority Education and Training, and Communications with Minority Constituencies. The work of the former led eventually to various initiatives by the Board of Educational Affairs and the Committee on Accreditation to enhance minority participation. The activities of the latter resulted in the establishment of Division 45.

My years as head of OEMA were a wonderful experience. They allowed me to serve ethnic minority communities and to acquire a deeper appreciation of the scope of the science and profession of psychology. I am grateful for that opportunity.

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***From Identity to Generativity: APA Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs' 25th Anniversary***

Lillian Comas-Díaz, PhD



**Lillian Comas-Díaz, PhD**

As the second director of the APA Office of the Ethnic Minority Affairs (OEMA), my tenure coincided with a major developmental milestone: The founding of the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (Division 45). I came to Washington in 1984 to work with the Board of Ethnic Minority Affairs (BEMA) and its task forces on Minority Education and Training, and on Communications with Minority Constituents. After the growing pains of establishing itself as a governmental structure, BEMA embarked on increasing its impact by fostering the establishment of a division on ethnic minority psychology. In 1986 Division 45 was developed to promote the development of knowledge and understanding of ethnic minority psychology; the application of psychological principles specific to ethnic minorities; consideration of how social concerns impact ethnic minority populations, and incorporation of the importance of diversity in society (Comas-Díaz, 1990).

Another OEMA goal was to increase the representation of psychologists of color in the APA governance. Under my direction, OEMA published the first Directory of Ethnic Minority Psychologists. This publication proved to be an excellent resource for networking and promotion of ethnic minority experts. So successful was the directory, that OEMA continued to publish several updated editions of the directory.

One of my goals was to develop solidarity with diverse groups. In this capacity I participated in the American Psychological Association and American Psychiatric Association site visit on Human Rights and Mental Health to Chile. Amado M. Padilla, chair of the Committee on International Issues in Psychology in 1985, accompanied me. This delegation made

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history; it marked APA's official commitment to investigating human rights violations in the international arena. OEMA's efforts helped to formally establish APA's international partnership with underdeveloped countries.

Collaborating with the Publications and Communications Board Ad Hoc Committee for Increasing the Representation of Under Represented Groups in the Publication Process helped me to nurture a dream: The creation of an APA journal devoted to ethnic minority psychology. This dream lasted for almost 15 years. In 1999 Division 45 launched its official journal, *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. The journal became a forum for the dissemination of scholarship in all aspects of ethnic minority psychology, including the psychology of race, diversity, and multiculturalism. As fate would have it, I became the journal's Founding Editor-in Chief.

*“During my OEMA tenure I witnessed its transformation from identity (establishment of Division 45) to nurturance (promotion of psychologists of color).”*

— Lillian Comas-Díaz, PhD

During my OEMA tenure I witnessed its transformation from identity (establishment of Division 45) to nurturance (promotion of psychologists of color). I envision OEMA's future as fostering generativity in psychology. Within this context, OEMA will continue to sustain an increasing community of scholars, researchers, practitioners,

public policy advocates, and many others interested in ethnic minority issues. During the past 25 years, North American psychology has been described as monocultural (Kennedy, Scheirer, & Rogers, 1985). OEMA's generative work can help to mainstream multiculturalism into science, practice and training. Moreover, it can foster cultural competence as an officially required skill for psychologists' licensure and certification.

In the next quarter of a century, the United States' average resident will trace his or her descent to Africa, Asia, the Hispanic/Latino world, the

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Pacific Islands, Arabia, almost anywhere but White Europe (Henry, 1990). Consequently, diverse worldviews will continue to infuse our society with multiple perspectives. OEMA can guide psychology through this transformation. Our field will emerge as an integration of Eastern and indigenous traditions with Western orientations (Bankart, Koshikawa, Nedate, & Hakuri, 1992).

I envision OEMA as a pathfinder, challenging psychology's ethnocentric lens, and facilitating pluralism in psychology. Cultural competence, cross-cultural communication, management of diversity, and ethnic conflict negotiation constitute

*I envision OEMA as a pathfinder, challenging psychology's ethnocentric lens, and facilitating pluralism in psychology .*

— Lillian Comas-Díaz, PhD

necessary paradigms for such development. As a pathfinder, OEMA can chart new avenues for psychologists. Ethnic minority psychology's interdisciplinary approach provides a partnership model for working in the political arena. Race relations will continue to be a critical issue in our society. Racial trauma, political terrorism, and cultural resilience (Elsass, 1992) are topics within the purview of ethnic minority psychology. OEMA can coordinate this effort.

The Native American concept of the medicine wheel states that our journey to the East connects us with our spirit; to the South with our emotions and relationships; to the West with our physicality, and to the North with our wisdom and community (Melh-Medrona, 2003). In the past 25 years OEMA has inspired our spirit, connected our relations, and affirmed our cultures. The next 25 years our journey will be teaching our wisdom to the next generation. Like in the past 25 years, OEMA will help us to establish psychology of color as the psychology of ALL PEOPLE.

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***The Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs: 1987-1989***

Christine I. Hall, PhD



**Christine I. Hall, PhD**

Congratulations to OEMA for 25 years of growth and success. I feel extremely honored to be a part of OEMA's history. I am privileged to be in such an esteemed group of psychologists who have served as Director of OEMA.

OEMA was fairly young when I became Director. In 1986, I had just returned from a life-changing vacation in Tahiti (which I had won in a drawing). I was attending the 1986 APA convention and was standing in a corner talking

with Stanley Sue. We were philosophizing about life and what was important (a trip to Tahiti will do that to you). I was approached by several people to apply for the OEMA Directorship. I did not want to move to DC; I wanted to move to Tahiti. However, additional people approached me and said I would be supported by every ethnic psychological association because all the associations trusted me to address their needs. I was honored. Needless to say, my dreams of moving to Tahiti never came to fruition and I was blessed to become the next Director of OEMA.

The two years I spent with APA were probably the most memorable in my career. How exciting to work in a guild organization of over 100,000 members strong. I was also in our nation's capital. I lobbied on the Hill and partied in Dupont Circle. I traveled 3 weeks out of every month spreading the word of the importance of diversity in psychology.

I also became friends with three very important women in my life (the list is alphabetical order and does not reflect which one I love the most, Pam): **Lillian Comas-Dias** (past OEMA director), **Gwen Keita** (Director of the Office of Women's Programs) and **Pam Reid** (the Director of Social and Ethical Responsibility). The three of us meet for dinner every APA and share our past year's joys, sorrows and plans for the next year. They are very special women.

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There were several major issues APA was addressing during my tenure as Director:

- The battle between the researchers and the practitioners and the move to develop a separate organization for researchers. It was a very dangerous time. It was suggested that APA staffers not take any positions because it could be problematic. However, at that time, I was an officer in a division and was asked to state my opinion. I explained how my doing this was inappropriate since I was APA staff. I was convinced that it was my responsibility and that no repercussions would come from my statement. I was young and believed them. One day after I stated my opinion, I was called into the CEO's office because one of the division officers had wanted me reprimanded for my opinion (because it was at odds with hers) He was kind to me and simply said to keep my head low. It was a powerful lesson on trust — none exists in politics.
  
- It was also the time of major budget problems for APA. Committees were being cut as cost-saving measures. The BEMA chair, Sarah Miyahira, and I made some difficult decisions that year.

However, the memories of the accomplishments of OEMA during my two-year tenure are stronger than any crises I can remember:

We developed an electronic directory database where I could search for ethnic psychologists by state, area of discipline, and ethnicity. It does not sound very difficult in 2003, but it was quite an accomplishment in 1987 when there were no packaged programs for this. An APA information technology employee aided me in this endeavor and we had the first electronic directory and also published a hard copy version.

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I had always wanted to accomplish one important task before I left OEMA — establishing guidelines for working with populations of color. Ethical Guidelines stressed that a psychologist could not practice outside of “his/her expertise”, however the expertise for working with minority populations had not been delineated.

**Sarah Miyahira** established a committee that composed the first *Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations*. These guidelines opened the way for APA's newest *Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice and Organizational*

*“I had always wanted to accomplish one important task before I left OEMA — establishing guidelines for working with populations of color.”*

— Christine Hall, PhD

*Change for Psychologists*. The 1989 guidelines were not perfect but they were a beginning and we desperately needed a document that could help lead the way. I am the most proud of these guidelines and thank Sarah and the committee for making me feel that I made a difference in ethnic psychology.

In the 1980's, it was believed that APA Directors should only serve 2 to 3 years. Thus, it was recommended you begin searching for another position after 1 ½ to 2 years in the office. I applied for an administrative position to help start a new university in Phoenix — Arizona State University West. I was selected for the position and left APA in March of 1989.

I learned much from APA and OEMA —

- Learned how to be a staffer — it is an extremely important and difficult role.
- Learned how to take minutes/notes. Again, you may laugh but notetaking is a valuable tool.
- Learned how to live on very few hours of sleep over a 5 to 6 day period during APA Conventions.

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- Learned how to travel — packing, airport, use of time, best luggage to use, etc.
- Learned how to work the political system of a large national organization (APA) and small organizations (OEMA, BEMA, committees, divisions, etc.).

Congratulations again to OEMA. I am honored to be a part of its history. I look forward to the future.



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***Looking Back on the Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs on its Silver Anniversary***

L. Philip Guzmán, PhD



**L. Philip Guzmán, PhD**

My tenure at the APA Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (OEMA) began in October 1989 after serving nine years as the Executive Director of the Gándara Mental Health Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. Gándara Mental Health Center was the only bilingual/bicultural mental health agency in the Massachusetts serving the Latino population. This experience heightened my awareness of the lack of ethnic racial mental health professionals in the mental health field. Therefore, when I went to

Washington, I was determined to increase the ethnic racial representation in psychology as well as raise awareness of the importance to cultural competency among all psychologists.

Upon arriving at APA, I was immediately given two tasks. The first was to pass a resolution against English-only initiatives that were cropping up across the country. To my surprise, I encountered great resistance to this resolution that counteracted a national movement that would eliminate a state's need to provide any material in any language other than English. With the support of the then Board of Ethnic Minority Affairs (BEMA), the resolution was passed by APA.

The second task was to have APA Council of Representatives endorse the *Guidelines for Psychological Services to Linguistic and Culturally Diverse Populations*. Considerable work had already been done by BEMA but the *Guidelines* had not been officially approved by APA. The *Guidelines* were finally approved and is a model example for cultural competency in the mental health field.

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*“The major challenge, I thought, was to increase the representation of ethnic racial group members in psychology. In this area, I found the influence of APA limited.”*

— L. Philip Guzmán, PhD

I mentioned these two tasks not because they were the most important issues but because they were the most doable, concrete and defined tasks that I had to deal with while at APA. The major challenge, I thought, was to increase the representation of ethnic racial group members in psychology. In this area, I found the influence of APA limited. APA could only advise or encourage graduate schools to culturally diversify its

student body. Each graduate school controlled whom they would admit as psychology students.

I had often heard many psychologists in academia state that “we just can’t find qualified ethnic racial students”. As a result of this challenge, OEMA developed Minority Undergraduate Students of Excellence (MUSE). The MUSE program not only identified culturally diverse undergraduate students, but also distributed the list of such students to all the graduate programs in the country with the hope that they would be recruited.

The objective of the MUSE program was to increase the percentage of culturally diverse psychologists. During the late 80’s, only 5% to 6% of all psychologists were culturally diverse. I am hopeful that that percentage has increased over time. If so, the MUSE program would have accomplished its objective.

*“As the population of the U.S. continues to diversify, the research and applied needs of culturally diverse populations will become more and more urgent.”*

— L. Philip Guzmán,  
PhD

In 1993 I left APA to return to mental health administration. As the President/CEO of the Child Guidance Center of Greater Bridgeport, I am again very aware of the lack of cultural diversity within the mental health field, and in particular, psychology. As the

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population of the U. S. continues to diversify, the research and applied needs of culturally diverse populations will become more and more urgent. If psychology is to continue to be a relevant discipline it must address the under representation of ethnic racial groups.

It was during my time as the Director of OEMA that APA reorganized its organizational structure. BEMA was asked to go from board status to a committee within the Public Interest Directorate. This was a major decision for BEMA since it would mean an external loss of status yet such a move would help streamline the operations of APA. Observing the accomplishments that Bertha Holliday has achieved to date, OEMA and CEMA have not suffered from this decision.

Dr. Holliday has done a tremendous job in continuing the mission of the Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs to be the voice of cultural diversity with in the field and profession of psychology. Congratulations to OEMA on 25 years of service!



***OEMA - 1994 to Present: CEMRRAT As The Cornerstone***

Bertha G. Holliday, PhD



**Bertha G. Holliday, PhD**

I became OEMA's fifth director in January 1994. I thought it would be a relatively short-term career move – a 2 or 3 year transition job out of government work into something else. But I have been at OEMA 10 years now. And I really believe I have one of the most exciting jobs in psychology!

When I came to OEMA, the really hard work had been done by my predecessors: OEMA had been established and legitimized as a valuable

component of APA; an infrastructure of governance, long-term goals, and major emphases had been defined by BEMA/CEMA and their early Task Forces. OEMA had developed a track record of accomplishment related to such concerns as constituency-building and membership development, ethnic minority mental health issues, empowerment and inclusion of ethnic minority psychologists in APA governance, and ethnic minority training issues. The excellence of these prior efforts was evident in the support that I have continuously received from APA's top leadership and management to engage in innovative, and sometimes risky efforts. I have never heard the admonition so familiar to those involved in diversity efforts: "You're going too fast on this – we aren't ready yet". I thank my predecessors for clearing the space for serious, relatively unfettered, work on ethnic minority issues in psychology.

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— Bertha G. Holliday, PhD

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Upon coming to APA, I was immediately informed of interest in developing some type of plan for ethnic minority recruitment and training. Having been involved in developing countless such plans over the years, almost all of which resulted in relatively minimal change, my initial response was “Oh no! Not again,— done that, been there”. But then I spoke with APA President Ron Fox , who shared his vision of such a plan. He conveyed a sincerity and commitment that nearly unbalanced me. A bit later I spoke with Richard Suinn who would chair the effort – and he dispelled any of my lingering doubts.

The Commission on Ethnic Minority Recruitment, Retention, and Training in Psychology (CEMRRAT) and its Five-Year Plan have been the cornerstone of OEMA’s efforts during my tenure. The boldness, directness, insistence, and inclusiveness of the language of CEMRRAT’s Final Report continue to inspire our efforts. Many of the CEMRRAT Plan recommendations have been implemented almost verbatim as they were proposed . This is most noteworthy in the case of the APA/NIGMS Project for increasing the participation of minorities in the biomedical areas of psychology, which has been funded by major grants from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. CEMRRAT’s concern about ethnic minority visibility and voice in psychology continue to guide OEMA’s publication and member communication efforts. CEMRRAT’s concern about the process, content, and context of training led us to develop OEMA’s Psychology and Racism initiative, which to date has included a major miniconvention in 1997, an ongoing national conversation on psychology and racism, and involvement in the UN World Conference Against Racism. We have also developed an initiative for psychology students and faculty at ethnic minority serving institutions. We worked hard to get APA to establish an ethnic minority advocacy agenda. We have developed several collaborative efforts with other APA offices. We have continued to strengthen APA’s relationship with the national ethnic

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minority psychology associations. The bottomline is that nearly all of what we have done and how we have done it has been guided and inspired by CEMRRAT.

At 25 years of age, OEMA is challenged to engage in the (re)education of a new generation of psychologists, who know little of the origins and early efforts of ethnic minority issues in psychology. And we are challenged to continue to devise strategies for institutionalizing the gains and efforts that OEMA has made during its first 25 years. We are also challenged to envision a multicultural and global future, as well as the skills, knowledge, experiences and sensibilities that psychology in general, and psychologists of color in APA particular, must have to effectively contribute to that future.

*“The bottomline is that nearly all of what we have done and how we have done it has been guided and inspired by CEMRRAT.”*

— Bertha G Holliday,  
PhD

As has been the case since its establishment, the excellence with which OEMA will address these challenges is dependent upon the passion, clarity and persistence of your (its constituents’) concerns and efforts. I think the continued growth in the participation and roles of persons of color in APA divisions, state psychological associations, APA governance, and other entities of organized psychology, bodes extremely well for that future.

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***Looking Towards the Future — Mentoring Ethnic Minority Students:  
Progress Steady But Work Still Needed***

Anthony Castro, MS, 2004 APAGS - CEMA Chairperson



**Anthony Castro, MS**

Graduate students are often referred to as psychology's leaders of tomorrow. While this is practically true, these leaders are rarely created without the support and guidance from today's psychologists. For this reason, psychology has increasingly become aware of the importance of adding to the academic and professional development of graduate students through efforts to properly mentor them. As psychology continues to expand its services across new areas of practice, as our nation's population

continues to grow in its diversity, and as the scientific and research aspects of our field continues to expand, this statement has never been more relevant than now and speaks directly to the issues faced by graduate students of color.

Over the years, graduate students and psychologists of color have worked to attain exceptional levels of proficiency in all areas of practice, science and academia. Nevertheless, despite these efforts, the number of ethnic minorities in psychology remains low. However, through efforts to enrich the knowledge pool within psychology, diversity has steadily become an institutional priority. Educational systems and professional organizations have slowly begun addressing diversity through the recruitment of outstanding minority faculty, the development of excellent training and research opportunities, and the expansion of financial and student support services.

Consistent with these goals, graduate students of color also envision working in an ethnically diverse and culturally sensitive field, whereby the opportunities for development and advancement are equally available and where their individual contributions are well received and highly encouraged. However, this vision cannot fully evolve without continued

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support, nor can our institutions or professional membership organizations flourish without the continuous collaboration and steady communication that has been displayed in the past. Psychologists must remain vigilant about these issues, particularly within their current establishments, and serve as channels whereby members of underrepresented groups have the opportunity to advance into prominent positions within our field.

Psychologists, both within and outside of these institutional and organizational systems, have historically extended their support to their future colleagues and have made an overall commitment to improving the transitional path from graduate student to psychologist. Many have taken on the mentoring role while others have organized and continue to oversee diversity-focused student groups within their own settings. These programs remain extremely valuable and strongly enrich the educational experiences of graduate students of color. It is vital to the success of psychology that similar initiatives continue to receive support (including fiscal) from various institutions and organizations. A clear example of this has been the establishment and many products of the American Psychological Association's Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (APA-OEMA), which, since inception, has consistently provided a voice for ethnic minority issues within psychology.

Throughout its existence, APA-OEMA has consistently operated to build the network capabilities between many minority organizations with the purpose of increasing the awareness of ethnic minority concerns. This effort has directly impacted the development of graduate students of color, as it has served as a vehicle for the development and implementation of various mentorship projects, financial support programs, and student initiated and centered organizations. In addition, APA-OEMA has collaborated with various state, divisional, and national committee's on ethnic minority affairs toward these ends. In celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of APA's OEMA, it is important to recognize and applaud the numerous efforts that have been made by this APA office.

It is equally important that graduate students and psychologists of color do not become forced into the multi- or cross-cultural subspecialty of

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psychology solely as a result of inadequate and ineffective channels made available to them throughout their careers. As psychology expands into different research and practice realms, so will the interests of graduate students and early career psychologists of color. Therefore, this level of dedication and support should extend across all areas and levels of APA and the field so to achieve a truly integrated professional community. It is also our expectation that through the current initiatives in place and through an increase in collaborative efforts, we will achieve these goals and grow closer to realizing this vision in all aspects of our psychology.





**OEMA:  
Twenty Five Years  
of Supporting  
Diversity, Inclusion,  
and Empowerment**

