

PREFACE: 125 YEARS OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

In the 25 years since this volume was first published, on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the American Psychological Association (APA), the organization has continued to serve both as a reflection of and a catalyst for major changes in American psychology and society. As the coeditors of the first volume (Rand B. Evans, Virginia Staudt Sexton, and Thomas C. Cadwallader) noted in their preface, the history of the APA is intertwined with the history of American psychology itself. With this relationship in mind, in this updated edition we explore what the history of the past 125 years of the Association can reveal about some of the major changes and currents in psychology as it moved from the 19th, through the 20th, and now firmly into the 21st century.

To this end, we have added a new chapter titled “Challenges to the American Psychological Association and Paths for the Future” (Chapter 10) that reviews some of the major developments, challenges, and controversies the APA has faced since 1992, thereby extending the late Raymond Fowler’s coverage in his original chapter to the present time. We have also significantly updated the chapter originally authored by Elizabeth Scarborough on Women in the APA (Chapter 11), and the chapter by M. Brewster Smith on the APA and Social Responsibility (Chapter 12). Both of these original chapters

provided overviews and analyses of these issues from the earliest years of the APA to the time the previous volume was published, and so required updating. In both cases, we also provide some reflection on how the last 25 years have built on or diverged from the trajectories outlined by these original authors.

American psychology in the 21st century faces a landscape that is more diverse than ever, as many psychologists have sought meaning and identity in alternative perspectives on the field. In addition, psychologists in other countries, especially in what Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı has called the Majority World, have rejected the hegemony of the American approach to the field and what they perceive as its colonizing character. While we have not directly addressed these concerns here, they are omnipresent and portend a very different future for psychology. Some of the issues we raise in the new chapter and in the additions to two extant chapters will need to be addressed so that American psychology can continue to find a place at the world table. We believe that a critical historical approach can help the APA and American psychology understand what needs to be done if we are to participate meaningfully in this ever-expanding conversation.

The bulk of the original volume (Chapters 1–9) presented solid historical analyses of the APA organized chronologically and divided into a number of time periods. These essays have stood the test of time, and are reprinted here in the hopes that an ongoing awareness of the historical development of our discipline will help inform contemporary psychology. Developmental understandings are central to our field, no less so at the disciplinary level than at the level of the individual or group.

Finally, a note on a number of the original chapter authors who have passed away since 1992 and have not lived to see the APA at its 125th. These are: Charles D. Spielberger (1927–2013), Virginia Staudt Sexton (1916–1997), Franz Samelson (1923–2015), Ernest R. Hilgard (1904–2001), Meredith P. Crawford (1910–2002), Raymond D. Fowler (1930–2015), Elizabeth Scarborough (1935–2015), and M. Brewster Smith (1919–2012). Through their contributions as psychologists, as historians, and now as historical figures themselves, each of them played a valuable role in the ongoing reflexive task of shaping a discipline. We hope that this edition both honors and adds to their efforts.