

1997: THE BIRTH OF ASBH IN PICTURES AND COMMENTARIES

Loretta M. Kopelman, Ph.D.
ASBH Founding President 1997-1998

The American Society of Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH) was incorporated in early 1998, with an organizational managing company and budget, but 1997 was the year it was created with only the hard work of many of our colleagues. It arose from the merger of three organizations, the Society for Health and Human Values (SHHV), the American Association for Bioethics (AAB), and the Society for Bioethics Consultation (SBC), whose members voted overwhelmingly to consolidate.

The goal of this four-part project is to collect the pictures and memories about the birth of ASBH from those who worked to establish our now flourishing organization. Part 1 briefly describes the three organizations that merged into ASBH, focusing on their distinctive features. Part 2 contains the pictures of the members of the founding ASBH Board of Directors who served from early 1997 until October 1999. Most of them shared their comments about the merger or early days of ASBH. Part 3 has pictures and accounts by other colleagues who made important contributions to the consolidation. These comments reveal the differences and similarities among these groups as well as why we believed joining into one large, multidisciplinary organization would help the field of bioethics flourish. Certain themes emerge in these comments including what is the proper role of bioethicists, what constitutes good work in bioethics, if or when ASBH as an organization should take stands on substantive moral and policy issues, and if or how diversity in our field is important. Part 4 remembers and honors our friends who worked to establish ASBH but who have passed away.

While we gathered pictures of our colleagues from many sources, most of them were taken in informal settings by Haavi Morreim at yearly, week-long meetings founded by Art Caplan known as ‘Bioethics Summer Camp’ that many of us attended. We owe Haavi special recognition for contributing these lovely and insightful photographs and for the time and expense of preparing them for this project. Plans exist to make many more of her pictures available on the ASBH website. I would also like to thank my colleagues Ana Iltis, John Moskop, Carol Taylor and Nancy King, and AMC associates Mary Beth Benner and Brooke Siegel for their encouragement and support. Finally, particular thanks should go to the contributors. This project could not have been done without their willingness to dig deep into their memories and files to write their commentaries.*

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The consolidation of three bioethics organizations occurred in 1997 after bioethics had evolved from obscurity in the early 1970s to becoming a prominent part of academic and public discourse. Its popularity was linked to the issues that define bioethics, namely, an array of challenging medical, moral, legal and social issues, including debates about professionalism,

**This history document is the result of generous contributions from some of the founders of ASBH. It reflects their experiences and efforts to launch the organization and create the foundation on which the organization stands today. Comments and observations are the participants own. This is not an official ASBH publication.*

confidentiality, patients' rights, human research, abortion, reproductive ethics, assisted suicide, personhood, environmental ethics, access to health care, racism, and determining death and dying in an age of new technologies. By the 1990s bioethicists were in demand. They increasingly had important roles as consultants in hospitals, clinics, communities, legislatures, professional organizations and industry; they were members of hospital ethics committees, research boards, and NIH study sections and served as expert witnesses in the courts and on national and international task forces.

There was considerable overlap among SHHV, SBC and AAB's approaches to bioethics, not surprisingly since many of us belonged to all three organizations. Yet each had some distinctive features worth considering.

The Society for Health and Human Values (SHHV) was the largest and oldest of the three organizations that merged to form ASBH. Physicians, hospital clergy and theologians were the predominant members of SHHV when it was established in 1969, at a time before most people had heard of bioethics. This membership, however, changed almost immediately as many philosophers, lawyers, social scientists and other health professionals and academics joined SHHV in the 1970s. One of its primary missions was to make people aware of the challenging moral, professional, educational and social problems in bioethics and to provide a forum to discuss the values and virtues needed to deal with them. SHHV promoted public and scholarly discourse about bioethics and its leaders helped establish bioethics programs in colleges, universities and professional schools. They believed we should reflect on our personal and professional values and responsibilities to help deal with these problems. Edmund D. Pellegrino, M.D. served as its first president. Ed also chaired its Institute on Human Values in Medicine that sought to integrate humanities into medical education. Until the SHHV membership got too big, its savvy and influential leadership had SHHV meet each year with the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC). Medical school deans, chairs, and other medical educators and students attended SHHV programs. Media coverage of AAMC sometimes also reported on SHHV sessions. Some may recall the international coverage that started from reporters attending an SHHV session at the AAMC meeting criticizing the practice of teaching medical students to do pelvic examinations on anesthetized women without their consent.

The Society for Bioethics Consultations (SBC) grew out of a conference held in 1985 sponsored by Albert Jonsen and John Fletcher on identifying, examining and resolving ethical problems in clinical cases (Jonsen, 1998 *Birth of Bioethics* p. 367). This objective fit with the methods and concerns of people working in hospitals, research institutions and clinics who sometimes had cases with difficult moral problems that needed to be analyzed and resolved. This case-based approach also reflected the interests of SBC co-founder Albert Jonsen who defended casuistry as a way to solve practical and theoretical problems. Identifying and comparing the similarities or differences among cases can be used to establish helpful guidance for resolving decisions in other cases about what should be done. Such paradigms were generally viewed as contingent but as having cumulative force, so they could be both useful in providing direction and flexible as new data or technologies became available. The case method often used by SBC members promoted intense study of perplexing clinical ethical problems, such as end-of-life decision-making, to try to establish such guidance. Stuart Youngner served as SBC's final President (1994-1997) and was active in the merger negotiations.

The American Association of Bioethics (AAB) was established in 1994 with Arthur Caplan as its founding president and with Daniel Wikler, Dan Brock and Steve Miles serving as its subsequent presidents. Mary Faith Marshall was its president-elect at the time of the merger. Its founders believed that their new organization would foster more rigorous analysis and research into the problems characterizing bioethics. Many AAB members thought that those likely to make good contributions to policy formation or to public and scholarly discourse in bioethics had expertise in a particular discipline such as law, medicine, philosophy, nursing or social science and also were interested in engaging in the multidisciplinary work needed to address many bioethical issues. AAB also built ties, which ASBH preserved, to legislative, medical, media and other groups to advance policy and improve public discourse in responding to the problems that characterize bioethics.

The members of the three groups believed that their goals and interdisciplinary methods overlapped and that more united us than divided us. Those of us belonging to all three groups, moreover, found it difficult to find the time or funds to support more than one national organization. Around the time of the merger, Al Jonsen states that SHHV had 842 members, AAB had 613 and SBC had 149 (Jonsen, 1998 *Birth of Bioethics* xiiin). In November 1998, at the first meeting of the ASBH, our management company AMC estimated that ASBH had 1200 members.

After the members of SHHV, AAB and SBC voted to consolidate, each organization appointed four representatives to constitute the inaugural Board of Directors of ASBH. Board members worked on the merger throughout 1997, initially by phone conferencing. The first in-person meeting of the founding Board of ASBH was in October, 1997 in Baltimore Maryland, at what was both a celebration of the creation ASBH and a joint but final meeting of SHHV, AAB and SBC. The founding Board continued to meet from early 1997 until October 1999, when a new, elected Board took office. Almost every member of the founding board took on multiple tasks and set up committees to help them. The inaugural Board selected me as its founding president (1997-1998) and Mary Faith Marshall as its second (1998-1999). Tom Murray was the first President elected by the membership of ASBH (1999-2000).

The founding Board's many accomplishments included merging the three organizations, selecting and approving a name, drafting bylaws, planning for elections in 1998, establishing key committees, arranging for the joint meeting of SHHV, AAB and SBC to celebrate the creation of ASBH in October 1997 and the first meeting of ASBH in 1998. The Board also exceeded targets for membership, and approved a budget with \$20,000 in reserve. In addition, it set up affinity groups for philosophy, history of medical ethics, hospice and palliative medicine, literature and medicine, residency education, nursing, osteopathic medicine, program directors, rehabilitation ethics, students, visual arts, and cultural representations. It also selected AMC as its organizational management firm, preserved alliances of SHHV, AAB and SBC for ASBH, and established ASBH policies, procedures, a webpage, a newsletter and standing committees. The founding Board also adopted the following statement of goals for ASBH:

The goals of the American Society of Bioethics and Humanities include promoting interest in bioethics and humanities more effectively through excellence in scholarship, service, teaching, collegiality, and career development.

The commentaries collected for this project tell a story of colleagues working together to use their talents to fulfill these ASBH goals of “promoting interest in bioethics and humanities more effectively through excellence in scholarship, service, teaching, collegiality and career development.”

Loretta M. Kopelman, September 2020.

* Those with relevant material might consider donating it to an ASBH archive. Association Management Company (AMC), the management company employed by ASBH, has one. Another ASBH archive exists at the University of Texas Medical Branch Moody Medical Library, Blocker History of Medicine Collections. The UTMB library scans this material to make it available on line. It was established by the physician and medical historian Chester Burns, who also set up the SHHV archive at UTMB. Chester, an active member of SHHV and ASBH, asked me to donate material from my terms as the last president of SHHV and the founding president of ASBH to this collection, which I did.

PART II: COMMENTARIES BY FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS

Robert Arnold, M.D.

ASBH Founding Board Member 1997-1999

ASBH Founding Secretary /Treasurer 1997-1999

SHHV President 1996-1997



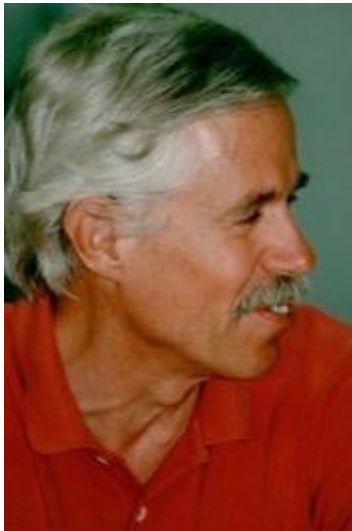
When I reflect back on the start of ASBH what comes to mind are the wonderful negotiations with fabulous leaders of bioethics – Stewart Youngner and Steve Miles. They realized that having three organizations in the space was not helpful to the field and wanted to build a new organization that took the best of the three organizations and give us something new. I also remember sitting down for multiple meetings with Baruch Brody who was so wise, kind, and politically astute. The organizations had different philosophies and as one might expect the negotiations had some bumps. (I remember Steve pushing proportional representation as we were wrapping up an agreement). Baruch kept reminding us not to let perfect be the enemy of the good (and kept me calm). I will always remember the comradery and conversations that birthed ASBH (as well as the great meals funded by William Stubing and the Greenwall Foundation).

Dan W. Brock, Ph.D.

ASBH Founding Board Member at Large 1997-1999

ASBH Founding Nominating Committee with Patty Marshall 1997-1999

AAB President 1996



There was considerable discussion among some members of AAB about the desirability to AAB of a merger. We saw AAB as having different, though overlapping roles from the other organizations focused on theology and bioethics consultation. Many of the initial founders of AAB were academic philosophers and were anxious to continue their work with a substantial role in the new organization. We realized the new organization would be different because of different people and enlarged membership, but felt that a single new membership organization could better serve the development of the field and the diverse roles played by the many members in it. Thus, we became significant endorsers of the new organization and played an active role in its birth.

We mourn the loss of Dan who passed away on Monday September 28, 2020. I had been corresponding with him the past week about his participation in this project that he welcomed despite his health problems. Dan Wikler expresses my thoughts when he wrote, "Dan was a pioneer and intellectual leader in bioethics, author of works of lasting influence and value on a great many of

the fields most significant issues, ranging from end-of-life decision making to ethical dimensions of cost-effective analysis and beyond.” He will be missed as a friend as well as a colleague.
 LMK

Chris Hackler, Ph.D.

ASBH Founding editor of ASBH Exchange, 1997-2001

ASBH Ex-Officio Founding Board member, 1997-2001



I had been appointed editor of the SHHV newsletter by President Rita Charon in the mid-nineties and became an ex-officio member of the SHHV Board as thoughts were turning to a possible merger. I remember the excitement over the synergy the merger could bring to our field (“field” was the term favored in SHHV over “discipline,” as the group was avowedly multi-disciplinary.) At the same time there was concern about what my colleague Charles Anderson (who edited Literature and Medicine after Rita) called the “soft underbelly of the humanities.” Would they be nudged to the sidelines by the seemingly more muscular bioethicists? Over the years, while occasional tensions may arise, the comingling of disciplines in ASBH seems to be working well.

When Loretta became the first president of ASBH she asked me to edit the new society’s newsletter. One issue in the merger that was reflected in the pages of ASBH Exchange was whether the organization should take stands on ethical and policy issues. The matter had actually been raised in the last years of SHHV by Erich Loewy. His family’s history of being attacked on Kristallnacht and barely getting out of Vienna to escape the Nazis lent both poignancy and potency to his arguments in its favor. Laurie Zoloth gave a talk, I believe her presidential address, passionately encouraging ASBH to endorse universal healthcare in the US.

Tris Engelhardt argued forcefully the other way, based on both his own libertarian philosophical views and the more pragmatic concern to avoid fracturing the new organization. Erich appealed to the concept of a profession itself as professing a set of constitutive values, while Tris replied that a professional *organization* must accommodate divergent views its members might reasonably hold, and that he would not want to belong to a society that did not respect this plurality of views.

The issue of taking stands was discussed in the publications of both SHHV and ASBH and will no doubt continue through the years, as it involves the potentially conflicting concepts and roles of a profession and of a professional organization, as well as intense personal experiences and deeply held philosophical convictions. As I recall, both Erich and Tris threatened to quit the organization if the other side prevailed. Erich in fact did, but Tris became a lifelong ASBH member. Let us hope the discussion continues and strengthens rather than weakens our society.

Ann Hudson Jones, Ph.D.
 Founding ASBH Board Member At Large 1997-1999



George Khushf, Ph.D.
 ASBH Founding Program Committee with Rebecca Pentz, 1997-1998
 ASBH Ex-Officio Founding Board 1997-1998



When Loretta's request came for my reflections, I managed to locate a long-forgotten box that contained files from my work with Becky Pentz as co-chair of that first ASBH Program Committee. Included among these files was a draft of my welcoming comments for the opening session of the ASBH meeting on Thursday morning, November 19, 1998. What struck me as I read back over them was the degree to which they emphasized continuity, disciplinary inclusiveness, and the rigor of our evaluation process. At that stage, bioethics and the health care humanities were vibrant fields with a rich heritage of established programs, practices, journals, and scholarship. While acknowledging the historical significance of ASBH and that first annual meeting, my emphasis nevertheless fell upon assuring members that our program committee tapped into the full scope of our inheritance so it could be preserved and also passed forward to students (via mentorship activities). My perspective on this continuity might have been a little different from those like Loretta Kopelman and Baruch Brody who played a central role in orchestrating the merger and that first ASBH meeting. They and others like my own mentor, Tris Engelhardt, were the trail blazers and institution builders. They had an energy to evoke a thousand projects at once and somehow draw a whole generation of scholars into their orbit. They can thus better appreciate the innovation needed make a unity from the antecedent differences. But at the level of the Program Committee, the sense of continuity was dominant, as I think it was for the majority of

the membership. I don't think most who attended earlier meetings of the three professional organizations noticed a major difference when they came to that 1998 ASBH meeting. This continuity was a given, but also was very intentional. Both Becky and I had been involved with program committees for the joint meeting of the precursor organizations, I with the Society for Health and Human Values (SHHV) and Becky, I think, with the Society for Bioethics Consultation (SBC). The Co-chairs of the 1999 ASBH meeting, Hilde Lindemann and Jeremy Sugarman, were members of our program committee, and could thus carry forward what they learned when working with us. To assure fair evaluation of all abstracts, we had great disciplinary diversity among the eleven members of our program committee, including representatives from philosophy, religious studies, history, literature, law, social science, nursing and medicine. When abstracts were submitted, there were 25 review categories that could be selected by applicants for classifying their topic or discipline. There were also six types of proposals, including individual papers, workshops, and case presentations. Each member of the program committee was responsible for working with outside reviewers associated with categories closest to their own areas. All abstracts had at least two outside double-blind reviews; most had three, and some four. We also interfaced extensively with the Management group that supports ASBH, and with the ASBH Board through periodic conference calls. My overall sense is thus of this wonderful rich interdisciplinary discourse already out there. The Founding Board and Loretta Kopelman, as first President, assured that the merger was able to take place in such a way that preserved this rich heritage and carried it forward without major disruption.

Loretta M. Kopelman, Ph.D.
 ASBH Founding President 1997-1998
 ASBH Liaison to Committees 1997-1999
 ASBH Founding Publications Committee with Ruth Macklin, 1997-1999
 ASBH Founding Board Member at large 1998-1999
 SHHV President 1996-1997



Bob Arnold, SHHV President before me, and I supported the merger of SHHV with SBC and AAB because having three similar and competing bioethics organizations in the U.S. was untenable. We were, however, uncertain we would get the supermajority required by SHHV's bylaws for its approval. In reflecting on the successes of ASBH, it might be useful to consider why some SHHV members opposed the merger.

Some members were reluctant to endorse the consolidation because they had long since found a home in SHHV. I understood this feeling. When I joined SHHV in 1974 and began attending its meetings, I had received my Ph.D. in philosophy and was studying ethical problems in genetic screening at the University of Rochester School of Medicine as a National Endowment for the Humanities Junior Humanist Fellow. At SHHV I found many people also working on philosophical issues in bioethics, teaching philosophy courses about them and building bioethics programs. SHHV provided a place for career development with opportunities to give papers, to have critical reviews, to meet colleagues and to discuss program development. It also provided opportunities to learn the value of diverse perspectives and multidisciplinary scholarship in bioethics discourse, teaching and scholarship. Up until the middle 1990s, those whose books and papers in bioethics most of us read and discussed, came to the annual SHHV meetings each year.

In addition, SHHV engendered loyalty by helping people establish bioethics programs in colleges, universities and professional schools. I obtained funding in 1979 from SHHV's Institute on Human Values in Medicine that was established to find ways to integrate the humanities into medical education. The Institute sent Tris Engelhardt, Larry Churchill and Tom McElhinney to the Brody School of Medicine. Their reviews and recommendations helped me secure two additional hard-money, tenure-tracked faculty positions.

Finally, SHHV had members from many fields including from health professions, law, religious studies, literature, pastoral care, social science, history, visual arts and student groups. Some worried that this diversity of approaches would not be valued in the same way in a new organization. For many of those fearing such marginalization, "humanities" came to stand for inclusiveness and "bioethics" for the sort of rigor in addressing problems such as are found in publications in philosophy, law, social science or academic medicine. The title, "American Society of Bioethics and Humanities" reflected that we wanted all groups to thrive in ASBH. My 1997 SHHV/ASBH Presidential address, "Bioethics and Humanities: What makes us one

field?” was intended to reinforce the importance of inclusiveness in bioethics (J Med Phil 1998, 23:4: 356-368).

The SHHV membership voted to approve the merger and the inaugural ASBH Board worked diligently to preserve the best of all three groups, promote diversity and merit loyalty. At the end of the Board’s first year, my dear friend Mary Faith, with her usual panache, brought champagne to celebrate.

Ruth Macklin, Ph.D.

ASBH Founding Board Member at Large 1997-1999

ASBH Founding Publications Committee with Loretta Kopelman 1997-1999

AAB Vice-President 1994-95



ASBH Lifetime Achievement Award. The founding board of ASBH had numerous administrative and policy decisions to make. Board members knew that other organizations present an annual Lifetime Achievement Award to a deserving person, and decided that would be appropriate for the newly created ASBH. I was a founding board member (1997-1999), having been on the executive boards of the SBC and AAB and vice-president of the AAB in 1994-95. I don’t recall whether the founding board proposed the criteria for selection exactly as they are formulated today: “Criteria for selection include but are not limited to influential scholarship; research, artistic or literary works; significant scholarly, institutional, or organizational efforts that have enhanced the ethics of clinical practice; and/or meaningful contributions to undergraduate, graduate, professional, or public education in bioethics and/or the medical humanities.” These criteria reflect the recognition of activities in bioethics and the

medical humanities that go beyond those normally included in a traditional scholarly organization.

The founding board had the task of selecting the first persons to receive the honorary Lifetime Achievement Award. A number of names were put forward. It was fitting that Ed Pellegrino was chosen to receive the first award. He was not only a past president of the SHHV, but was also a pioneer in the field of medical ethics (as it was then called). Ed was 78 in 1998, the year he received the award. It was also fitting that the board chose the next two recipients of the award: Al Jonsen in 1999 and John Fletcher in 2000. As noted in the Introduction, Jonsen and Fletcher were co-founders of the SBC, so the award honored previous presidents and founders of two of the three organizations that merged to become the ASBH. Al Jonsen was 70 the year he received the award and John Fletcher was 73. The fourth recipient was Dan Callahan in 2001. Dan was one of the two founders of The Hastings Center, and had a decades-long tenure first as Director, then President of the Center (originally called the Institute for Society, Ethics, and the Life Sciences). I don’t know whether Dan was ever a member of any the three founding organizations or the ASBH itself. But the organization of which he was co-founder has continued to flourish

and enjoys an international reputation. Dan was 71 when he received the ASBH Lifetime Achievement Award.

Why do I mention the ages of these first four recipients of the award? In making the selections each year, the board considered other candidates as possible recipients. I remember a discussion during my tenure on the board regarding one individual who was in his early sixties at the time. Although age had not been mentioned as a factor in choosing the honoree, a conversation ensued about whether recipients should be viewed as nearing the end of their illustrious careers or whether a somewhat younger person with many accomplishments could be considered. I was surprised and gratified to receive the ASBH Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002. I was only 64 and did not consider myself to be nearing the end of my bioethics career. (Perhaps the board thought it would be good to select a woman.) Others in their 60s were subsequently chosen: Tom Beauchamp was 66, Jim Childress was 64, and Joanne Trautmann Banks was 63 when all three received the award in 2004. The youngest awardee was Howard Brody, who was 60 in 2009. The oldest was Jay Katz at 81 in 2003.

Here is the complete list of recipients of the ASBH Lifetime Achievement Award.

2019 - Christine Grady, PhD RN
2018 - Jonathan Moreno, PhD
2017 - Myra Christopher and Steven Miles, MD
2016 - Arthur Caplan, PhD
2015 - Baruch Brody, PhD
2014 - Nancy Dubler, LLB
2013 - H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr., MD PhD
2012 - Kathryn Montgomery, PhD
2011 - Ruth Faden, PhD MPH
2010 - Mark Siegler, MD
2009 - Howard Brody, MD PhD
2008 - Robert M. Veatch, PhD
2007 - Renée C. Fox, PhD
2006 - Ronald E. Cranford, MD and Bernard Gert, PhD
2005 - Eric Cassell, MD MACP
2004 - Tom L. Beauchamp, PhD, James F. Childress, PhD, and Joanne Trautmann Banks, PhD
2003 - Jay Katz, MD
2002 - Ruth Macklin, PhD
2001 - Daniel Callahan, PhD
2000 - John C. Fletcher, PhD
1999 - Albert R. Jonsen, PhD
1998 - Edmund D. Pellegrino, MD

Mary Faith Marshall, Ph.D., HEC-C, FCCM.
 ASBH President 1998-1999
 ASBH Founding Board Member at large 1997-8, 1999-2000
 ASBH Founding Committee on Professional Development
 ASBH Founding Committee on Professional Rights 1999
 AAB President-elect 1998
 SBC Board Member and Secretary 1994-7



We joked at the time that deciding on a logo for the new organization was the most fraught decision that the founding board members had to make. Not true, of course, but it symbolized the meticulous care and concern that went into creating ASBH. My journey to the founding board began with John Fletcher, who (unbeknownst to me) quietly secured me an invitation to the third annual Bioethics Summer Camp in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. He likely did similar behind-the-scenes maneuvering with Larry Nelson and Ron Cranford: they befriended this summer camp newbie who was a bit petrified at the idea of mingling so closely with bioethics' leading lights. I met Alta Charo at Jackson Hole; years later she nominated me for vice-president/president elect (after Steve Miles' tenure) of the AAB (thank you, Alta). This was my entrée onto the founding board. I was also a board member and secretary of the SBC then, so was grounded in many of the issues at hand.

What a heady time, and what a privilege to work with leaders in the field on this momentous undertaking. Friendships established then flourish to this day. As others have noted, serious questions arose about the scope and relative importance of the fields of bioethics and medical (now *health*) humanities. Most centered on tensions between the prominence of an academic bioethics (teaching and research were the priorities) versus the pragmatic *doing* of clinical ethics, and the academic standing of medical humanities. These were serious and fundamental arguments that charted the beginnings of ASBH. Some involved false distinctions, some were simply tooth-grindingly arrogant, e.g., the wincing and shuddering by uptown academicians regarding the downtown and lower-rent enterprise of ethics consultation (clinical ethics cases then and now foster important research, teaching, law and policy initiatives).

Most of the discord preceded the merger. I remember challenging Mark Siegler at an early SBC meeting for his ethics consultation model; it involved a complete physical examination by the ethics consultant, thus precluding nonphysicians from the field. The need for inclusiveness of all professions and disciplines was a central tenet of the negotiations.

One of the early debates forwarded by the founding board to the new organization polarized the first two ASBH meetings—the idea of the organization taking formal and public stands on substantive issues. Early business meetings of the membership were consumed by debates about

this. A fond memory is of Tris Engelhardt arguing vociferously against such a thing; how could the membership ever agree on matters of substance? The business meetings were so much more FUN (not to mention educational and entertaining) in those days! I challenged the position on positions in a 2007 book chapter in *The Ethics of Bioethics*, and subsequently addressed it in an invited talk at one of the ASBH affinity group meetings. The participants appeared to agree (they met the idea with a standing ovation). But I was subsequently notified by the affinity group's chair that I owed then ASBH president, Paul Wolpe, an apology (he neither expected nor received one). Years later, Steve Miles, founding board member, resigned his membership in ASBH because the organization refused to alter its position on positions.

The next serious issue arose at ASBH's 1998 meeting. My presidential address centered on the fact that the then president of the Medical University of South Carolina had refused to put my promotion before the Board of Trustees because of my involvement in *Ferguson v. City of Charleston et al.* Stuart Spicker, during the subsequent business meeting and again the following year, advocated vigorously for an ASBH mechanism to redress retribution against members who had acted in their professional capacities. Stuart championed the creation of the ASBH Committee on Professional Rights.

That committee no longer exists. Both of these issues have now been codified in ASBH's bylaws, Article III, Section 2;2.3: *The Society shall not issue positions on substantive moral and policy issues. The Society may adopt positions on matters related to academic freedom and professionalism in the fields of bioethics and humanities in health care upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the full Board of Directors. The Board may consider a position on its own motion or upon request in writing signed by fifty (50) members eligible to vote.*

Note the board's current end run: "ASBH Statement on Racial Injustice and Professionalism in Bioethics and Health Humanities." How it responded to a national crisis in a way that privileges its own and betrays important prima facie ethical commitments to the membership—that we put the interests of others first.

And thus, my enduring love, gratitude and admiration for Loretta.

Patricia Marshall, Ph.D.

ASBH Founding Board Member at Large 1997-1999

ASBH Founding Nominations Committee with Danial Brock, 1997-9



The merger of three independent bioethics and humanities organizations, Society for Health and Human Values, American Association of Bioethics, and the Society of Bioethics Consultation, was a daunting task. When ASBH was established, these three organizations had well defined missions and their members represented diverse professional interests in the humanities, ethics consultations, and broader bioethics issues. I remember concerns expressed by those in the field of literature, medicine and the humanities, that their interests might be relegated to the background or marginalized by other scholars. Yet, I also remember the extraordinary leadership by Loretta Kopelman, our first President of ASBH, and so many of those involved in our early planning meetings to transcend the individual agendas of the three organizations in order to achieve a more wide-ranging set of goals. I remember participating in these meetings, thinking about the wisdom and humor and thoughtful navigation that contributed to our “charter.” At our first meeting, Loretta Kopelman asked all of us sitting around the table to introduce ourselves and say something that went beyond a description of our work. I happened to be sitting next to Loretta and she asked if I would begin. I stood up, said something—about being tall, about my very large extended family—and everyone laughed. That seemed to break some of the understandable tension in the room. Here we are now, ASBH continues to thrive and evolve as the professional and scientific challenges in bioethics and the humanities change, shifting the landscape of our overarching concerns. I am so proud!

Pam Miya, Ph.D.

ASBH Founding Board Member at Large 1997-1999



Robert Orr, M.D.
 ASBH Founding Vice president 1997-1999
 ASBH Board Member at large 1997-1999



Rebecca Pentz, Ph.D.
 ASBH Founding Board Member at large 1997-1999
 ASBH Founding Program Committee with George Khushf



Merging three organizations with the somewhat stressed past history that Loretta explains so well is daunting enough, but what I found even more daunting was creating an organization that was useful to our remarkably diverse membership. The other organizations I am a member of, like the American Society of Clinical Oncology, may be diverse geographically, ethnically, racially, age, but the members are overwhelmingly, as the title states, clinical oncologists. But who are the members of ASBH - clinical ethicists, philosophers, conceptual ethicists, researchers, historians, humanities professors, clergy, doctors, lawyers, nurses, social workers, mere PhDs like me as in the cartoon in which the maître de asks the doctor “are you a real doctor or merely a PhD?”

How could we meet the needs and be relevant to such a diverse membership? How could a meeting attract PhDs who have never been in a hospital and a clinical ethicist who rounds daily in the ICU? Remarkably, I think the board was able to create a diverse program largely due to the great leadership of our first two Presidents, Loretta and Mary Faith, both women, and our great Vice President Bob Orr. Leadership does make the difference.

Robyn Shapiro

ASBH Founding Board Member at Large 1997-1999

ASBH Founding Bylaws Committee with Robert Arnold 1997-1999



Stuart Youngner, M.D.

ASBH Founding Board Member at Large 1997-1999

SBC President 1994-1997



It was an important chapter in the history of bioethics which had become big enough to have three organizations in the USA and the International Association of Bioethics (IAB) as well. The three USA organizations grew out of specialized interests and differing perspectives. It didn't take long for many to figure out that three organizations were three too many. Many of us had diverse interests and foci beyond those of one organization and had friends and colleagues in all three. We were disappointed by the rivalries that began to develop. Anyway, who wanted to go to three meetings a year and pay three sets of dues?

Fortunately, the leadership of the three organizations shared this perspective. It was a pleasure to work with Bob Arnold and Steve Miles, along with senior folks in all three organizations. If I remember correctly, the last meeting before the merger was a joint meeting in San Francisco where at least two of the organization met under the umbrella of IAB for a great meeting and a lovely transition to the creation of ASBH.

Members of the ASBH Founding Board had a working luncheon at the first in-person ASBH Board Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland in 1997. In the upper-right picture, visitor Richard Muir from the Association Management Center (AMC) sits next to Bob Orr and in front of Chris Hackler. ASBH hired AMC in 1998 and Dick was ASBH's Executive Director in our early years. We still use AMC.



PART III. OTHER COMMENTARIES

George Agich, Ph.D.
 SHHV Council 1996-1998
 SBC Board of Directors 1995-1998.
 ASBH Board Secretary-Treasurer 1998-2000.



I was on the Boards of both the Society for Health and Human Values (SHHV) and the Society for Bioethics Consultation (SBC) during the merger talks and did my best to represent both constituents. I thought, then and perhaps now still, that the new organization should be inclusive as far as membership and that its programs should be structured to meet academic as well as continuing education needs and interests. As the younger of the two societies I represented, SBC was convinced that the field of clinical ethics consultation was in a dynamic growth mode that needed nurturing and support. SHHV as the oldest society brought into ASBH the most diverse group of (mostly) academics from a variety of professional disciplines. Whereas SBC was primarily focused on providing education and support for health professionals and others who were fledglings in the field of clinical ethics, SHHV, especially since the founding of its Faculty Association, was focused on structuring its meetings along professional lines. SBC was thus structured to provide support and educational services to the field, whereas SHHV provided a professional forum for primarily academics to interact and present their research. My concern was that the new organization should work diligently to cultivate these diverse and perhaps divergent interests.

I mostly recall that there were many practical and administrative challenges and questions that we had to address. Some were contentious in the short term, but what sticks with me is the overall cooperative and collegial character of our discussions and debates. I think we shared the view that the field of bioethics, diverse as it is, should err on the side of inclusiveness. So, whatever might be lost in the merger, far more would be gained for the field of bioethics. I suppose that many of us who served on the merger committee might wish that some things had been structured differently, but I strongly feel that our course of action was sound. The field of bioethics is far more robust as a result.

Margret P. Battin, Ph.D.
AAB Board Member 1994-1996



To understand the emergence of the ASBH, let's go back to the beginnings—or almost back that far, to some of the earliest efforts to bring bioethicists together. In the 1970s and 1980s, there weren't many people working in bioethics and it wasn't much of an established field, just a handful of folks interested in issues like paternalism, informed consent, and end-of-life issues. We'd see each other at various conferences—there'd be a session or two on bioethics issues at a philosophy conference, or a major hospital would invite several of us to come to talk about an issue that was pressing for them, but no place you could see all the bioethicists at once. Art Caplan, Dan Wikler, and I started talking at some point: why don't we *all* get together?

Art volunteered to host. And Dan and I sat in a coffee shop somewhere on the east side, midtown as I recall, with a cocktail napkin. We wrote down the names of all the bioethicists we could think of and gave it to Art, who invited them all to the first “Bioethics Summer Camp,” held at a rustic resort in Lutsen, Minnesota. Summer Camp was born of the impulse to get bioethicists generally into one place—there were maybe 15 or 20 of us, at most—and the days involved intensive and very interesting discussions among the whole group, with afternoons of recreation time, also involving spirited ongoing discussion.

It was an invited group, invited because that was the only way to reach people working in the field. Over time, however, as it became better known, there was some resentment on the part of people who weren't invited—the field was growing larger, but there was no way to include everyone.

Fast forward to the genesis of the AAB. In January 1991, a few of us at the University of Utah held a conference in Salt Lake City on “Changing to National Health Care” (way ahead of its time). Dan Brock, Dan Wikler, Leslie Francis, Allan Buchanan, and others spoke. Unexpectedly, the conference filled the ballroom auditorium space. One of those evenings during the conference, I hosted a little informal dinner party at my house, and somehow talk turned to gaps in the then-existing bioethics groups, the SHHV, the SBC, the ASLM. As Leslie Francis puts it, there seemed to be very strong views that these organizations didn't give a home to the philosophers in the field. Indeed, we might conjecture, philosophers and their ilk might even be thought of as trouble-makers, always drawing out difficult implications, detecting flaws in argument form, finding nuances of meaning that made practical bioethics more challenging.

Bob Huefner remembers Dan Wikler being seized with an idea: why not form an organization given to consideration of bioethical theory and reflective practice? It would take some support—not much, but some. According to Bob, Dan rushed upstairs to my computer and banged out a short, pithy proposal on the spot; Bob took it to a familiar source of funding and a modest amount was provided right away, used to help negotiate the process of forming the AAB.

Contributions obtained by Dan Wikler came from other funders. Art Caplan also worked toward establishing this third pillar of the eventual ASBH—the founding of the AAB. My sense at the time was much like that around the formation of Summer Camp: the idea was to make it possible for bioethicists—in this case, the theoretically, philosophically inclined ones—to all come together in a single space.

Fast forward again. This time it's the formation of the ASBH by bringing together the SHHV, the SBC, and the AAB: the motivation, as I saw it then as an AAB Board member and thus party to this process, had much in common with the genesis first of Summer Camp, next the genesis of the AAB, and then that of the ASBH: the sense that if bioethicists of every stripe can come together, this will be an enormous advance in our professional and public capacity to think through sometime very difficult medical and moral issues of our times.

Arthur Caplan, Ph.D.
AAB Founding President 1994



Perhaps the biggest challenge confronting the merger was the dominance of the AAB by size and academic footprint over its would be partners. I had started an annual 'bioethics' summer camp when at the U of Minnesota and during meetings at the Lutsen Resort in Northern Minnesota; as the president of the AAB I tried to test the waters about a merger.

Some felt the SHHV clinical ethics group was a fit but ought to be a sub-section in a bigger group. Others doubted that the medical humanities would have enough in common with bioethics to merit a merger. The doubters felt the humanities at that time were not sufficiently rigorous or influential within health care to partner. I had to agree that bioethics had at that time achieved more prominence but I did not agree that a merger would do anything but help bioethics flourish.

My view was that the three groups would be viable under a single banner—but they were not likely to be financially viable on their own. Moreover, I believed there were enough commonalities among the organizations to make an intellectually and professionally important professional society. The battle then was over the intellectual scope of a new group, not political stances, credentialing or training standards.

With the push inside the AAB for the view that intellectual richness plus size was the best path for the AAB slowly the leadership and prominent voices came around to the idea of a mega-organization. I had spent a lot of time plumping for the merger inside the AAB. Once the AAB was on board I stepped away from most of the detailed merger negotiations and was content to hold the hands of the biggest doubters.

I remain very proud of the role I played in helping to permit the ASBH to come to pass.

Alexander Capron, LLB
 IAB President 2005 and 2006
 President III World Congress of Bioethics, 1995-1996
 President, American Society of Law and Medicine, 1988-1989



In 1995, Dan Wikler was in the first year of his two-year term as the president of the International Association of Bioethics (IAB), which had been founded at a meeting in Amsterdam in the summer of 1992 and then held its II World Congress of Bioethics in 1994 in Buenos Aires. At that time, I was president of the III World Congress of Bioethics, which was scheduled to be held in San Francisco in November 1996, organized by my center at USC.

Dan and I proposed to the other leaders of the newly formed American Association of Bioethics (which I believe had held a couple of smallish conferences, including in Philadelphia in 1995) that the AAB and IAB hold our meetings back-to-back. The two organizations reached an agreement to do that, with half a day of overlap and a reduced rate for registering for both meetings. The Pacific Center for Health Policy and Ethics at USC organized the logistics and accommodations for both meeting, while each association planned its own program and invited its speakers. The joint meeting meant that attendees got more bang-for-their-buck (in terms of travel and accommodation costs). On the IAB side, we were particularly interested in having the draw of the outstanding US bioethicists who were the leaders in the AAB, since many of the international scholars and practitioners who were on the World Congress program were less well known to Americans than they are today. This strategy was very successful: the AAB had larger attendance than at its previous meetings, and the total attendance in San Francisco made the event the largest gathering of bioethicists anywhere up until that time.

We thought this arrangement might set a pattern for later World Congresses to meet jointly with the relevant national bioethics' association, enriching and diversifying the intellectual fare for both. That has occurred at some subsequent congresses, but as far as our experience in the US, the ASBH quickly grew too large to consider a joint conference when the IAB returned to the US (in Philadelphia in 2020). The main form of joint meetings has instead been that the successive World Congresses have been organized to be contiguous to the biennial conferences of the Feminist Approaches to Bioethics, which began as a network within the IAB.).

At the meeting in San Francisco, the AAB leaders held discussions about the way forward, leading the following year to the creation of the ASBH. I was very pleased that the SHHV was a main pillar of the new society because that meant both that the theological roots of bioethics and pastoral work in healthcare institutions were prominent in the new society (as signified by the participation of leaders from that field, like John Fletcher) and that the humanistic side was well represented (by people like Dan Clouser). Thus, the new society wasn't "just" philosophy and law, along with interested physicians. I wasn't surprised that the American Society of Law & Medicine—of which I'd been President at the end of the 1980s—decided not to join the merger talks with the three more bioethics-focused organizations, not simply because it was already a

larger society but also because a large part of its membership were physicians with a specific focus on (and sometime dual qualification in) the law. As the ethical issues in medicine came to be more frequently discussed in that group, it added “& Ethics” to its name and recognized in its programming the overlap of ethics with legal and policy issues in healthcare. Still, I think our multidisciplinary field is better served by having two organizations, one that links bioethics to the humanities and clinical ethics and the other that is more oriented towards law and policy. But perhaps someday we should consider the benefits of having adjacent annual meetings.

Albert (Al) Jonsen, Ph.D.

SBC Founder with John Fletcher, Ph.D. 1985



“In 1985, John and Fletcher and I sponsored a meeting in Washington D.C. at which some 50 active consultants [in clinical ethics] convened and agreed to form an association, The Society for Bioethics Consultation. At that meeting, Laurance McCullough made a remark that summed up the challenge of the clinical ethicist: ‘I was educated as a philosopher, whose goal is to show people how complex simple questions are and that is just what clinicians do not want to hear!’ The daily work of ethics consultation was vividly described by a journalist who followed bioethicist Ruth Macklin on her rounds and conferences in the affiliated hospitals of New York’s Albert Einstein College of medicine. The cover article in the *New York Times Magazine* described in detail Dr. Macklin’s skillful participation in the discussions of physicians and nurses and families over agonizing cases. While some physician failed to appreciate the value of this work, most were eager to avail themselves of the lucidity and logic of Macklin’s discourse. One of those physicians is quoted: ‘The more you hang out with people like Ruth, the more you see the value of turning something over and over. You’ll still see errors, but maybe less serious ones.’ (A.R. Jonsen, 1998 *The Birth of Bioethics*, Oxford pp. 366-367)

Laurence B. McCullough, Ph.D.
SHHV President 1987-1988



The four gospels of the Christian bible were written anonymously four or more decades after the death of Jesus. By tradition, however, the writers were indeed the Evangelists and were protected from the unreliability of memory by divine inspiration. I am writing about the merger of the three predecessor societies – the Society for Health and Human Values, the Society for Bioethics Consultation, and the American Association for Bioethics – into the American Society for Bioethics and the Humanities at the remove of a quarter century with no correction from divine inspiration.

I had served as President of the Society for Health and Human Values for 1987-1988. I was therefore not directly involved in the negotiations that resulted in the creation of ASBH. In 1988 Baruch Brody (1943-2018) had invited me to join him and Tris Engelhardt (1941-2018) on the faculty of the Center for Medical Ethics and Health Policy, at Baylor College of Medicine, in the heart of the Texas Medical Center, in Houston, Texas. As other rapporteurs note, Baruch was involved deeply in the negotiations. I will come back to this point.

I do recall that there was concern from three groups, at least. The first were the hospital chaplains, who had played a major role in the founding of SHHV, although their role, as I recall, had diminished by the early 1990s. It was unclear to me where they would fit in ASBH. Nowhere, as it turned out, save those who were clinical ethics consultants. Having worked as a clinical ethics consultant with superb chaplain colleagues – who, again and again, through prayer and spiritual support of patients and, especially their families, saved the day – I can say that ASBH is less than it might have been if our colleagues in pastoral care had been made more welcome. The second were the clinical ethics consultants. George Agich, a leader in the development (and continued practice) of clinical ethics consultation, did participate in the merger negotiations, which he describes elsewhere in this document. The clinical ethics consultants were indeed included. The third were the medical humanists, colleagues in literature, art history, and a small, but hardy band of historians of medicine (who had their own professional society, the American Association for the History of Medicine, now in its 96th year).

These worries about marginalization had some merit. Some of those who started AAB took the view – or were, at least, reported to have taken the view – that the level of scholarship at SHHV was not rigorous, at worst, or not rigorous enough, at best. “Rigorous” had a sting to it, because it was a word used at that time (and for many years previously) by philosophers in the analytic tradition to marginalize other philosophers, e.g., scholars and teachers of Continental philosophy (Husserl, Heidegger) and American Pragmatism (James, Royce, Mead, Dewey, Pierce). (The charge was laughable at the time and still is, in retrospect, given the strategic ambiguity and vagueness that characterizes so much of the analytic tradition.) In addition, some of the philosophers in the AAB were not medical educators and gave the impression that they

had no commitment to philosophy or the other humanities in medical education and therefore to humanities scholars on medical, nursing, and other health professions faculties who would become for them new colleagues in ASBH. The appointments of Program Committee Chairs and members in the early years of ASBH, as well as the program itself, were scrutinized closely for signals that marginalization might be occurring. My sense is that this concern faded away within the first decade of ASBH, although not before concerns about marginalization of clinical ethics consultation had to be addressed.

In closing, let me return to Baruch Brody, whom I miss intensely. I have had the extraordinary opportunity of serving under outstanding academic leaders throughout the course of my academic life, without whose support my career as a philosopher-medical educator, scholar, and clinical ethics consultant would have been very, very different. Baruch was an academic leader *non pareil* and, as Bob Arnold correctly points out, a brilliant and effective academic politician (a term of high praise) – the likes of which ASBH and our field will never see again. Knowing that Baruch was involved in the merger negotiations gave me complete confidence that ASBH would be started as a strong, well-led professional society that would treat its members right, just as he treated Center faculty and staff right for 30 years. My confidence, as it turned out, was very well founded, as it was in every case in which Baruch Brody played a leadership role.

John Moskop, Ph.D.

ASBH Medical Education Task Force 2004-2007

ASBH Clinical Ethics Task Force: *Improving Competencies in Clinical Ethics Consultation: An Education Guide* in 2009. First Edition.



I am pleased to contribute a brief reflection to this retrospective project commemorating the founding of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities. As a bioethics teacher, scholar, and clinical ethicist since 1979, I have had the privilege of observing and benefiting from the development of bioethics as a field of scholarly inquiry over the past four decades. I joined the Society for Health and Human Values (SHHV) in 1976, while I served as a graduate research assistant for bioethics pioneer Dr. H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, and I was a regular attendee at SHHV meetings until the SHHV merged into the new ASBH in 1997 and 1998. I have been an ASBH member since its founding and have attended almost all of the now twenty-some ASBH annual conferences. The founding of the ASBH is, in my view, a major milestone in the brief history of the fields of bioethics and the medical humanities.

Created by the merger of three previous associations, the SHHV, the American Association for Bioethics (AAB), and the Society for Bioethics Consultation (SBC), the ASBH immediately became, and has clearly remained, the leading professional “home” for teachers, scholars, and practitioners in bioethics and the medical humanities. Membership in the ASBH, and attendance

at its annual meetings, have shown remarkable growth over the years, far surpassing the size of other national and international bioethics organizations. ASBH leaders have striven mightily to make the Society a welcoming organization that recognizes and addresses the needs and interests of its diverse membership and that encourages interdisciplinary collaboration among teachers, scholars, and health care professionals in a variety of disciplines.

For a number of years prior to the founding of the ASBH, my situation, like that of many other bioethics faculty and professionals interested in bioethics, was quite different. We faced decisions about whether to join or to retain memberships in the three professional societies mentioned above. The three societies had somewhat different goals and orientations to bioethics, but there was also considerable overlap among them. Each of the three societies solicited our membership, and each offered attractive opportunities for professional development. With limited funding for association membership and meeting registration fees, and limited time for attending professional meetings, most of us were unable to join and take advantage of the offerings of all three societies. As a long-term member of the SHHV, I felt a loyalty to that organization, and I thought that the interests that had led to the establishment of the AAB and the SBC could have been accommodated within the SHHV, but many others did not share that view.

I was, therefore, pleased and grateful for the decision to merge the three societies into a single ASBH, and I believe that the ASBH has been able to satisfy the overlapping professional interests of members of the three past organizations and of the growing number of bioethics and medical humanities professionals who have become ASBH members over the past two decades. I am deeply grateful to the leaders of the SHHV, AAB, and SBC for their recognition of the value of merging the three organizations and for their hard work in making that a reality through the creation of the ASBH. I look forward to continuing my commitment to the ASBH and to benefitting from attending its annual meetings and from its many other projects!

Steven Miles, M.D.
AAB President 1997



It was long ago in human years. 23 years: a generation. Many of the shaping voices are gone: Baruch Brody, Dan Callahan, Eric Cassell, Dan Clouser, Tris Engelhardt, John Fletcher, Erich Loewy, Ed Pellegrino, David Thomasma, Stephen Toulmin, and others. The history of ASBH gets tattered and partial with each memory's voice that is lost.

In 1996, Art Caplan was one of many who felt that the bioethics community should be served and represented by one association with annual meetings, a job service, and a journal. Aside from perhaps a dozen medical ethics centers, there were two organizations, The Society for Health and Human Values (largely academic physicians, philosophers and theologians) and the Society for Bioethics Consultation (largely clinicians serving on hospital ethics committees or one of the several state or regional networks of clinical ethics committees.) There was also a small Society for Law and Medicine mostly consisting of lawyers.

The SHHV was several times larger than the SBC. Its members had deep ties into academia. SBC mainly existed within the community of academic health centers which in those days were called teaching hospitals. The differences in communities, methods, size, budgets, and discourse were formidable barriers to a merger. The American Association of Bioethics was created by the impetus of Art Caplan who thus was its president. It had an informal board. Its members belonged to one or both of SHHV or SBC. The creation of the AAB precipitated the formal discussion of consolidation of the professional associations in the field of bioethics, biomedical ethics, or medical ethics. Scholars who thought two US associations was clunky were horrified at the idea of three sets of dues and meetings. As the debate over AAB's growth and role proceeded, Dan Wikler assumed its presidency. Under Dan, an agreement was reached between SHHV, SBC and AAB to hold discussions to see if a merger into a single professional organization was possible. A grant to fund travel and meeting expenses was obtained. AAB's board asked Steve Miles to become the fourth president, after Dan Brock, so that Steve could represent AAB at the merger meetings.

Preliminary talks started in 1996 and the merger was completed by 1997. During that time, Bob Arnold was SHHV President (1996), followed by Loretta Kopelman (1997), and Stuart Youngner was president of SBC (1996-1997). Art Caplan and Dan Wikler, who were both active in the founding of AAB, asked me to serve as its president in 1996-1997. Together these presidents of SHHV, AAB, and SBC worked to establish the foundation for the merger in 1997.

The merger talks were modest and quickly accomplished. The bylaws of the organizations were easily harmonized (with one exception). The question of financial merger between the much larger SHHV with the smaller SBC provoked the greatest discussion. That discussion was partly practical, about money and power. Fundamentally though the discussion explicitly and implicitly was concern about a potential culture shift from academic ethics to the clinical community. The shift was problematic because of the greater theoretical and humanistic sophistication of the SHHV community compared to the quotidian focus of clinical ethics practitioners. Accordingly, where clinical ethics tended to issues like research, end of life decisions and decision-making capacity, academic ethics' discourse was on the nature of the person or suffering or humanism or stranger medicine in the objectified world of health care. Significantly, given the date, neither constituency had much interest in critical race studies or determinants public health. There was a feminist studies constituency within the humanities.

There was one notable difference between the two sets of by-laws. One set, I recall it was SHHV, allowed the new entity to take positions on matters of public interest. That issue was not addressed in the SBC by-laws. From my position representing AAB, I felt that the new association should be able to take positions, as did PEN [An acronym for Poets, Essayists and Novelists an organization celebrating and defending free expression], in order to speak to critical issues and endorse core professional standards or principles. Others felt that taking stands would alienate members. There was an agreement to defer that issue and let it be decided by the membership of the new organization at the second annual meeting. The first meeting of course was to be a celebration. The presidents during the merger were granted membership of ASBH as a new president was chosen. A feisty debate at the second annual meeting did not change the initial bylaws' silence conferring the Society's power to take stands.

What to call this new entity? Society of Health and Human Values plus Society for Bioethics Consultation plus American Association of Bioethics or the SHHVSBCAAB was clearly impractical. AAB was POLITICALLY impossible despite its elegant simplicity. Therefore: (1) American was kept as a national designator, (2) Society was chosen over Association, (3) Humanities was chosen as the global word for Health and Human Values, and (4) Bioethics was chosen. Consultation was dropped so as to welcome all interested scholars regardless of whether they were working in clinical settings.

Haavi Morreim, J.D., Ph.D.
SHHV Board 1992-95
SBC Board 1993-96,



I began doing bioethics in 1980 at UVA. My work, then and now, has been fully in the clinical setting, never the traditional courses-in-classrooms teaching. Back then bioethics was relatively new, and clinically-based bioethics was rarer still. There weren't really any models to follow, so I pretty much had to figure out what to do, on the fly. Quickly it became evident that the then-typical philosophical hypotheticals and "lifeboat" discourse were far removed from the complexities and nuances of the clinical setting. My physician colleagues were wonderfully helpful in that effort to sort through clinical realities and re-frame those stark philosophical "dilemmas" into what I came to call "moral problem-solving in medicine."

It was through the gracious outreach of John Fletcher, then at NIH, that I first heard of SHHV. John had read a small newspaper piece about our new program for ethics at UVA Medical School and sent me a letter. I'll bet I still have it somewhere. He invited me to come up to NIH to see what he was doing up there, and in the process helped me connect with others such as Dan Clouser and Al Vastyan up at Penn State. I later visited them as well.

With John, Dan, Al and SHHV, all of a sudden I wasn't alone. Those who were active in bioethics, sprinkled as we were across the country, found one another as kindred souls and were able together to further build bioethics as an ever more responsive way to sort through the evolving challenges of healthcare. SBC came along later, specifically focusing on a key area of my own interest, the clinical consult.

I was on the boards of SHHV (1992-95) and SBC (1993-96), hence also took part in early merger discussions. As others have noted, one dimension was economic – it was challenging to afford even one annual meeting every year, let alone two or three – and the other was philosophical: how do we recognize the great diversity in the backgrounds people bring to the field and continue to serve those diverse needs, without stretching so thin as to be of little value to anyone. The challenge is ongoing, but I believe ASBH has found a fine balance.

A note about the photos – Art Caplan and Peggy Battin mention the Summer Camp series that they and Dan Wikler began in the late '80s in Minnesota. In 1992 at Jackson Hole I began taking my camera and long lens, trying to capture candid portrait shots. It became a fun project, now with hundreds of photos. Recently I had them all digitized, and our plan is to place them on a website with free access for everyone. Stay tuned . .

Thomas H. Murray, Ph.D.
ASBH President 1999-2000.
SHHV President 1993-1994



As I write this in late September 2020, a hero of women's rights and civil rights, Ruth Bader Ginsberg has just died and this nation faces an election that could determine whether we are, in fact, capable of keeping the democracy we value so dearly. Issues at the heart of Bioethics and Humanities like justice and access to health care, racism and eugenics, and abortion play a vital role in the divisions that afflict us. For those of us who continue to believe that clarity, honesty, sound reasoning and respect for facts matter, the work that scholars do is essential, as is the work done by clinicians, scientists, pastoral care, clinical ethicists, and lawyers.

I was, I suppose, a sort of bookends for the merger. I happened to be president of SHHV in 1993-4 and I can testify that the founding of AAB was seen by some, perhaps many, people as something less unimpeachably noble than its founders claimed.

The leadership of SHHV believed there was ample room to further develop "rigorous analysis and research" within the organization, as it had been doing increasingly over the years. AAB's founding was also seen as a not-very-backhanded insult to the scholars who were active members of SHHV who believed with good reason in the quality and rigor of their own work. The one thing the creation of a new organization did accomplish—it created new offices for people who had not been elected to leadership positions within SHHV.

At the time of AAB's founding I said that it would take a few years for the founding officers to have their moment; after that, merger would become possible. As it did.

My fondest recollection is of a weekend afternoon in the living room of our then-home in Shaker Heights, Ohio. A happy combination of events had brought the leaders of SHHV, AAB and SBC together in Cleveland for various meetings. Sentiment in favor of merging the three associations had grown sufficiently that a frank conversation about the desirability of a merger, and how practically to accomplish it, was possible, indeed welcomed. As I remember, I poured wine as my colleague, Stuart Youngner, led the dialogue. The outline of the process culminating in the merger was set that afternoon.

The closing bookend was serving as the first President of ASBH to be elected by the full membership. The first two Presidents—Loretta Kopelman and Mary Faith Marshall—were chosen by the ASBH Board according to the agreed process. They served ably to guide the nascent organization into its new, thriving, existence.

Dan Wikler, Ph.D.
AAB President 1995



To give an account of the origins of the American Association of Bioethics, it's necessary to speak of the professional currents and countercurrents within the field in its early years.

I'm a "Boomer". We were a very political generation, living in turbulent times. Many of us who had chosen philosophy as a profession were drawn to bioethics for the chance it offered us to engage with important real-world issues in our professional capacity. There weren't many of us in the 1970s and 1980s. Philosophy meetings rarely included bioethics, and bioethics meetings were run by people from other fields – mostly physicians and theologians. We weren't fully at home in either.

So we began to create our own events.

One opportunity was afforded us by the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979-1983), the first of the series of national bioethics advisory committees. Three philosophy professors,* successively served as "Staff Philosophers." It featured a Philosophy Advisory Board, whose members each contributed an essay to Volume II of the President's Commission report *Securing Access to Health Care*. Philippa Foot and other well-known philosophers were engaged as expert advisors, turning Commission meetings into the kind of tutorials we enjoyed as graduate students.

Art Caplan, Peggy Battin and I initiated a series of "Bioethics Summer Camps" in rustic settings where mornings and evenings were devoted to informal but searching debates over current bioethical controversies, leaving afternoons for communing with nature.

As these events drew in more and more of our colleagues in philosophy and bordering academic disciplines, we began talking seriously about creating a professional association in bioethics in which we would feel at home. By the early 1990s, the International Association of Bioethics – which a number of us were active in – had begun the series of biannual bioethics world congresses that has continued to the present day.*** Accordingly, the name chosen for the new society was the American Association of Bioethics.

Discussions on initiating and launching such an organization took place in Salt Lake City and at the New York Academy of Medicine in 1991. The AAB first met in Pittsburgh in 1994; then in

Philadelphia, 1995; and in San Francisco 1996. The first meetings were held at the same time and place as the Society for Health and Human Values, the Society for Bioethics Consultation, and (sometimes) the American Society for Law, Medicine, and Ethics. Art Caplan was the first AAB president, followed by myself, Dan Brock, and Steve Miles.

The 1996 meeting was conjoined only to that year's Bioethics World Congress of the International Association of Bioethics. That occasion was the high point in the realization of the organization's aims. It was a comprehensive scholarly meeting, organized by the academic types who had envisioned a scholarly society run by and on behalf of our peers; and our partnering organization was the IAB, which in many respects was the global version of the AAB.

But it was not to last. Four societies were too many; we were fragmenting the field. Each organization had its own idea of what a bioethics society should be like, but rather than pursue somewhat divergent paths it made the most sense to merge. And in truth AAB over time had become more like the other organizations, in large part because of the overlap in membership. Wise and diplomatic colleagues sealed the deal and the ASBH was born.

* Myself, Dan Brock, and Allen Buchanan

**** The original roster included Norman Daniels, David Gauthier, Allen Gibbard, Sidney Morgenbesser, and George Sher, along with Brock and Buchanan.

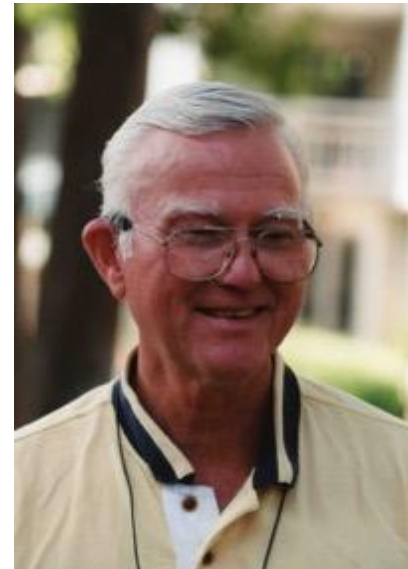
***Thanks to the expert management of the University of Pennsylvania bioethicists who made the 2020 event into a virtual success.

PART IV: IN MEMORIAM

Baruch Brody Ph.D., Marian Grey Secundy Ph.D., H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr. M.D. Ph.D.,
Daniel Callahan Ph.D., Bernard Gert Ph.D., Anita Silvers Ph.D.



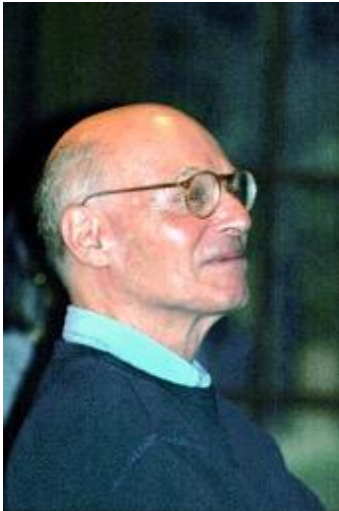
K. Danner Clouser Ph.D., Adrienne Asch Ph.D., John Fletcher Ph.D., Renee Claire Fox, Edmond Pellegrino M.D.



David Thomasma Ph.D., Stuart Spicker Ph.D., Erich Loewy M.D., Jay Katz, M.D., John Arras Ph.D., Stephen Toulmin Ph.D.



Laurance J. Schneiderman M.D., Van Rensselaer Potter Ph.D., Chester Burns M.D., Ph.D., Charles L. Bosk Ph.D., David Rothman Ph.D. Eric Cassell M.D., Robert Veatch, Ph.D.



Dan W. Brock Ph.D., Ronald E. Cranford, M.D.

