

From the President's Desk: Looking back, looking ahead

September 2021—As my term as president of the College of American Pathologists comes to a close, I am both honored and humbled to have been selected by my peers for this position. Over the past two years our organization was presented with the greatest challenge we have ever faced. Because of our phenomenal members and staff, we have accomplished great things even though we worked under the most adverse conditions. We, yet again, backed a horse named CAP. It broke out of the gate well and had to weave through traffic on a bad track, but we are ahead. We made the right bet and I am so, so lucky to have been chosen to be the jockey for this race.

Looking back, the COVID-19 pandemic presented our community with relatively sudden and profound changes resulting in a tremendous number of challenges. It has dominated our lives. We should be proud of our accomplishments. We have not only put out many fires and sewn up deep wounds, but we have also set up the College and our fellows for continued success so that we will be able to keep serving our patients well.



Dr. Godbey

Many, many people have said things to me such as, “I bet this wasn’t the presidency you expected. . . . I feel sorry for you.” Well, I would like to say how I feel. I believe that I am the most fortunate person to ever have had the opportunity to be president of this organization. No other president has been given the chance to champion pathologists and the laboratories we direct like I have. When I finish this column, I will talk with someone from the *Wall Street Journal* and then the *New York Times*. Sometimes they want to be educated, and sometimes they just want to run things by you. The important point is that they now call a pathologist first when they have questions. This is new. The pandemic gave us a chance to shine, and we are now considered by the press, by elected officials, by the FDA as well as the CMS to be an authority on testing. More than ever before, patients know who we are.

There have been many other issues that the CAP needed to address during my tenure as president. Early in my term, I worked with several of my CAP colleagues on the search for a new editor to entrust with our flagship journal, *Archives of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine*. Alain Borczuk, MD, has proved to be an excellent leader for the publication and will ensure that it maintains its sterling reputation among pathologists.

We have also pushed to improve committee structures and responsibilities within the CAP. We took steps to make our committee appointment process much more transparent. We developed a uniform application for these positions, and the information about our committees found on the website is much improved. By taking a close look at committee membership and involvement, we were able to make it possible for more fellows to serve in these important bodies.

I am proud that during my tenure the CAP, in no uncertain terms, took a stand against racism—all racism, of any kind, anywhere. In addition, the CAP, in no uncertain terms, took a stand against violence—all violence, of any kind, anywhere. We formed our first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. It will take a long time to

accomplish our DEI goals, but I have no doubt the CAP is going to do it right and create lasting change.

We found a new home for our Pathologists Quality Registry as a Qualified Clinical Data Registry, which is the first clinical data registry designed by pathologists for pathologists. The QCDR will now be overseen by the new Quality and Clinical Data Registry Affairs Committee.

We also improved the accreditation process, an important step in our ongoing mission to ensure the best quality across all clinical laboratories. Our Council on Accreditation had to find a way to make sure our inspection processes continued to assure quality while meeting the access challenges dealt by COVID-19. We achieved that, and the CAP continues to be the gold standard for laboratory accreditation throughout the world.

We have worked hard to modernize the CAP in the past two years. We now have a standing Information Technology Leadership Committee, and by the time you read this, the CAP will have its first ever app. I have had a preview, and it is fantastic! It is an example of how well our membership-staff partnership works. We are embracing technology that will serve CAP fellows for years to come. As part of that push, we have worked hard to make education programs available online, and the uptake has been huge. All of these programs were developed by FCAPs, because I believe there is no one better to provide top-notch training about pathology.

I have also worked closely with my CAP colleagues to ensure the financial stability of our organization. Something that's fun and a part of this effort is that the CAP now offers pathologist-focused merchandise through an online store. You can now order CAP-branded hoodies, notebooks, masks, and hats. The last item is particularly important for people with my hairstyle. We updated PathPAC to enable donations by credit card and to allow monthly automated donations, making it easier than ever for pathologists to support the CAP's peerless advocacy work.

Our efforts in Washington, DC, have been incredibly successful. From mitigating expected cuts to pathology services from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to securing financial support in the COVID-19 pandemic and making digital/remote sign-out possible, the CAP has accomplished a great deal for pathologists in the past two years.

There has also been time for celebrating. During my term, the CAP reached its 75th anniversary. We marked the milestone with the publication of a book about the CAP written by past CAP president Paul Bachner, MD; managing editor James Crumley; and CAP staff Mary Katherine Krause, Nancy Johnson, Drew Davis, Opel Aguila, and Clemmie Lozano. In addition, we created a new award to recognize medical students who have a promising future in pathology. This has been a goal of mine for the past 10 years, and this year we finally gave out the first award.

While I have enjoyed being your president, I am pleased to be handing the reins to Emily Volk, MD. She and I have a long history of collaboration through the CAP and I consider her a trusted confidante. I have a great deal of respect for Dr. Volk and for many years have been the beneficiary of her advice. She will be an excellent leader, and I look forward to seeing the great things she will achieve during her tenure.

One of the best things about being active in the CAP is all the people you get to meet and get to know. This includes both pathologists and staff as well as their families. My wife, Donna Godbey, our daughter, Elizabeth Godbey, MD, FCAP, and I have all had our lives greatly enriched because of this. By the way, of the three Godbeyes who are involved in the CAP, the author of this column is the least impressive.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate a point I have made often on these pages. As pathologists, we exist for one reason and one reason only: to benefit our patients. And the CAP exists for one reason and one reason only: to benefit our members so we can do the best job possible taking care of our patients. I believe that over the past two years we have indeed justified our existence in trumps, and we should be proud of the work we have done. I am grateful for the privilege to lead the CAP and to have had the opportunity to show the world who we are and what we can do. Thank you all!

Dr. Godbey welcomes communication from CAP members. Write to him at president@cap.org.