

## **Joel Saegert, APA Div. 23 Consumer Psychology President 1988**

### **Joel Saegert's Thoughts:**

When I was president in the late '80s, Division 23 had a tradition, if not a written policy, of "electing" its president from the ranks of practitioners and academics in alternate years. To some extent, this reflected the fact that the Division was founded (relatively early in the history of APA division governance) largely by PhDs in psychology who had found themselves in the advertising industry. I suspect that these individuals, while dedicated to building their careers in the highly competitive domain of practical advertising, wanted to maintain ties with the perceived respectability of the theories and methodologies of their doctoral training. I fondly remember their pursuing interest in practical issues through paper presentations and symposia at the annual conferences and I appreciated the reality checks with which they sometimes challenged the rest of us.

In recent times the practice of academic and practitioner presidential rotations has been abandoned. Division members are focused on academic research that is more likely to be publishable in consumer, marketing and psychology journals while application to the business world is generally considered incidental to conference and journal acceptance. Consequently, participation in the Division by practitioners has become rare.

Good, say those who want the rigor and decorum of scientific psychology to serve as the benchmark for the discipline's development and who even may be uncomfortable pursuing research that might address the businessperson's task. At the same time, in addition to publishing findings in academic journals, nearly all of our careers necessarily involve teaching principles of business to undergraduate and MBA students. And moreover, business' problem of profitably matching and promoting offerings to the wants and desires of prospective customers will always remain.

Division 23/SCP and the discipline it represents have been hugely successful in recent years both in leadership and membership; however, it seems ironic to me that the energy of one of its original directions has faded away. It would be interesting to see if the Division couldn't pursue more purposefully the intersection between the *ax* and *prax* worlds, perhaps to address issues in business application and the teaching of business principles, in addition to pursuit of scholarly publication.