

## **William Wells, APA Div. 23 Consumer Psychology President 1979**

### **William Wells' Thoughts:**

It may not be widely known that an unsuccessful attempt to establish a Consumer Research Division of APA was made a few years before the successful attempt to establish Division 23. A group of psychology PhDs interested in consumer behavior made a formal presentation and application to APA-Washington, and APA said no, largely because they then favored a small number of large Divisions rather than a large number of small Divisions, but also because many of the PhD psychologists interested in consumer behavior worked for advertising agencies and other profit-making organizations, and such employment was considered unholy, second only to original sin. Later, APA opened the Division-forming option to almost any psychology PhD-based interest group, and Division 23 was successfully established, though still unholy and still small. Not much has changed.

Source of the idea to have co-presidents in 1985 following election tie: The source of the idea was the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta "The Gondoliers," a Victorian spoof of the British monarchy. In this story a gondolier was asked to take care of an infant crown prince along with his own infant son, but--due to a "terrible taste for tippling,"--"could never declare with a mind sincere which of the two was his offspring dear and which the royal stripling." When it came time for the crown prince to become King, nobody could tell which of the two heirs apparent was the real crown prince and which was the gondolier's son, so they made them both King. Note: not co-King. Both became King. Much more impressive than co-King. This solution worked out very well in the operetta, so we thought it would also work out well for Division 23 some years later. And it did. So far as I know, the first and only time a Division of the APA had two Presidents (not co-Presidents).