

Public Education and Media Relations in Psychology

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This article reviews psychology's attempts to influence public attitudes about both the science and the profession of psychology. The early history of the profession is reviewed, and the efforts of the American Psychological Association (APA) to shape the public's perception of psychology are discussed. The rise of social media is reviewed, and important social media outlets relevant to psychology are identified. The activities of the Society for Media Psychology and Technology (APA Division 46) are illustrated, and the presidents of the Division are identified. The work of those psychologists who are noted public intellectuals or who have received Nobel prizes or National Medal of Science awards for their research is briefly reviewed, and the public notoriety of 4 prominent media celebrities (Joy Browne, Joyce Brothers, Laura Schlessinger, and Phil McGraw) is discussed. Several controversies in the field of psychology that have influenced the public and their attitudes about psychology are also briefly reviewed.

Keywords: APA, media, public relations, perception of psychologists, Nobel prizes

Media Relations in the American Psychological Association's (APA's) First Nine Decades (1892–1982)

Psychology has always faced public information challenges, from the earliest days of the APA until today. For example, early on organized psychology struggled to differentiate psychotherapy from phrenology and other questionable practices. Today, APA continues in its efforts to successfully inform the public about the full breadth of psychology from basic science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) research to evidence-based psychological interventions.

This article reviews the history of psychologists' efforts to use media to inform the public about the science and practice of psychology. It highlights the work of several

psychologists who have achieved recognition as public intellectuals through popular books or significant awards such as the Nobel Prize or the National Medal of Science, notes the contributions and controversies associated with several media psychologists, discusses media portrayals of psychologists and psychology, reviews a few of APA's recent public education efforts, and discusses several controversial issues that have bedeviled psychology.

Psychology as a scientific discipline is often said to have begun in Wilhelm Wundt's laboratory, and Wundt was the first person to be widely recognized as a psychologist. William James, a Harvard professor, was the first person to offer a psychology course in the United States, and he is often referred to as the "father of American Psychology." James was the third and thirteenth president of the APA, which had been founded in 1892 with Granville Stanley Hall as its first president. Public intellectuals like James had considerable influence among the intelligentsia of the time, and publication of James's *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) helped establish the new field of psychology. Two years later, James published *Psychology: The Briefer Course* (1892) in a deliberate attempt to educate the public. Despite James's work, there is little evidence the nascent American Psychological Association (APA) did much to actively shape public opinion about the science or practice of psychology in the first decade of organized psychology.

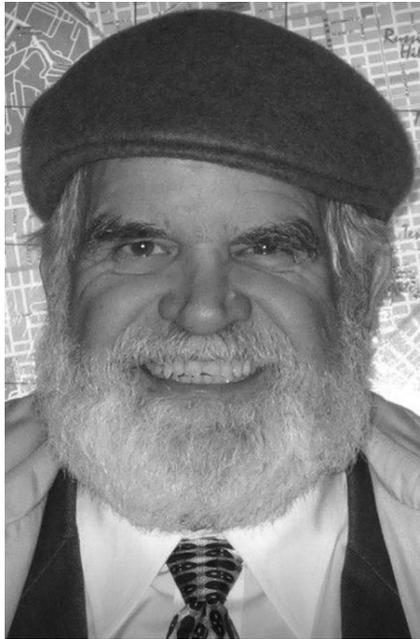
Fin de siècle psychologists actively tried to establish "mental therapeutics" as a legitimate approach to treatment of emotional disorders; these efforts were aided by the

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“Emmanuel Movement,” an approach to religious healing that utilized both individual and group modalities to treat psychological problems, especially alcoholism.

As late as 1907 Americans knew little of psychotherapy. The word itself was virtually nowhere to be found in either professional or popular literature. . . . Lasting from 1906 to 1910, this popular movement [the Emmanuel Movement] was the primary agent responsible for the efflorescence of psychotherapy in the United States. (Caplan, 1998, p. 289)

Although some psychologists, most notably James R. Angell, championed the Emmanuel Movement, many others, including Lightner Witmer and Hugo Münsterberg, were critical and worked to highlight the differences between psychology’s efforts to address emotional distress and the practices of the Emmanuel Movement. Although relatively short lived, the Emmanuel Movement did pave the way for the recognition of the importance of Sigmund Freud’s work in the United States.

In September 1909 Freud delivered a series of lectures at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. His talks received ample coverage not only in the scholarly press but also in the popular press. . . . His provocative analyses of dreams, slips of the tongue, the unconscious, and infantile sexuality not only made for good copy but also stimulated a lively professional debate among physicians and psychologists. (Caplan, 1998, p. 306)

Psychologists actively tried to share their science with the general public during the period circa 1900–1915, but they tended to do this more often as individual psychologists rather than operating through their fledgling pro-

fessional association. Many of these efforts involved teaching the public about effective parenting methods, applying psychological science to interpersonal relationships, and educating children with special needs. Psychologists often used popular magazines as vehicles for public education, including widely read publications such as *Harpers*, *Colliers*, *Reader’s Digest*, and the *Atlantic Monthly* (Benjamin, 1986).

Radio Psychologists

Psychologists realized the full potential for public education with the increasingly widespread use of radios in the 1920s (Harris, 2011). Early radio psychologists included Florence Goodenough, Marion Sayle Taylor, James Angell, Edward Thorndike, John B. Watson, and Walter Miles (Harris, 2011). Angell, Thorndike, Watson, and Miles each served as APA president (1906, 1912, 1915, and 1932, respectively). Watson was the best-known radio psychologist, and he exploited print media as well, writing a column for *Harpers* and frequently giving advice on child rearing for *Parents* magazine; Watson was a controversial and provocative figure who eventually left academic psychology for marketing. He is credited with developing the slogan “I’d walk a mile for a Camel” (Kutner, 1997).

Public interest in psychology continued to grow during the first third of the 20th century (Figure 1), and the public looked to the profession for advice about child rearing and relationships. The Child Study Association of America sponsored numerous talks on raising children, and in 1929, journalist Albert Wiggam brought psychology to the nation with “Your Mind,” an extremely popular show based on his 1928 book titled *Exploring Your Mind with the Psychologists* (Harris, 2011). The public’s ambivalence about uncritically embracing the recommendations of psychologists is beautifully captured by a famous *Saturday Evening Post* cover by Norman Rockwell (November 25, 1933) that depicted a mother spanking a hapless child with one hand while holding a book titled “Child Psychology” in the other.

During the depression, public attention shifted to more basic issues such as poverty and hunger, and there was a clear decline in interest in psychology per se. Interest resurged after World War II (Figure 1), when more than a million soldiers were discharged for neuropsychiatric reasons, and the roles of psychologists began to change from simple psychological assessment to active treatment (Farreras, Routh, & Cautin, 2016). The Soldiers’ Readjustment Act of 1944 (the “GI Bill”) provided financial support for millions of returning service members, and psychology proved to be a popular undergraduate major; public awareness of the science of psychology was facilitated by numerous dinner table conversations about the courses taken and the topics studied. In addition, Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals and Bureau of Public Health hospitals had

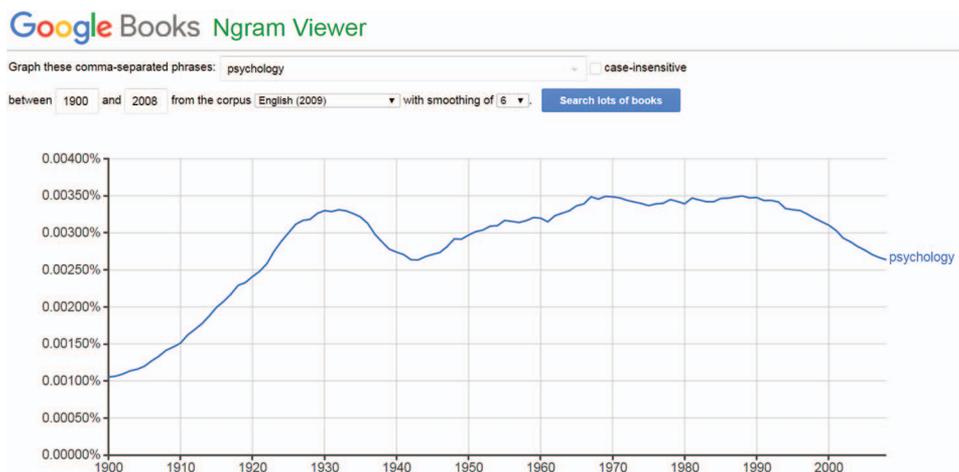


Figure 1. Ngram illustration documenting the number of references to psychology in Google Books, 1900–2008. See the online article for the color version of figure.

a pressing need for trained mental health personnel, and they accepted the doctoral degree as the appropriate standard of training for clinical psychologists (Baker & Pickren, 2007). Wade Pickren noted:

Many WWII veterans were interested in psychology as a result of their wartime experiences and the GI Bill (Soldiers' Readjustment Act of 1944) provided financial subsistence for both undergraduate and graduate education of these veterans. Concurrently, the large number of World War II veterans who needed continued medical and psychological care after military discharge prompted the VA to initiate large scale training programs in four mental health disciplines: psychiatry, psychiatric nursing, clinical social work, and clinical psychology. The impact of this program on clinical psychology was enormous and can hardly be overstated. (Pickren, 2003, p. 6)

The U.S. government turned to the APA to identify high-quality training programs. The 1946 APA Annual Report noted "Three federal agencies, the Veterans Administration, the Federal Security Agency, and the U.S. Public Health Service, have asked [the Association] for lists of departments of psychology which the Association could recommend for graduate training in clinical psychology" (Wolfe, 1946, p. 538).

APA Presidents

Numerous APA Presidents have highlighted the importance of enhancing the public's appreciation for the science of psychology. George A. Miller, in his Presidential Address to the APA (Miller, 1969), famously argued that we should "give psychology away," stating:

Our obligations as citizens, however, are considerably broader than our obligations as scientists. When psychological issues are raised in this broader context, we cannot

evade them by complaining that they are unscientific. If we have something of practical value to contribute, we should make every effort to insure that it is implemented. (p. 1063)

Miller's presidency was followed by that of George Albee (1970) and Kenneth Clark (1971), both of whom were deeply committed to social justice, advocacy, and psychology's role in public education. In his presidential address, Albee noted:

If professional psychologists are truly concerned with human welfare we could forget "psychiatric patients" for a century and turn our attention to the psychological causes of racism, sexism, and of the profit motive as sources of danger to the human-centered life. . . . Our society locks up overt paranoids. But it pays honor and respect to the industrialist who builds automobiles that are death traps, who sprays our fruit with coal tar poisons, and who shows utter disregard for the public good in a simpleminded search for profits and power. (APA, Public Information and Media Relations, Public Communications, 1970, p. 1)

Seven years later, Robert Perloff (1985 APA President) would encourage psychologists to develop exhibits for rural, regional, national, and international fairs "to help the lay public understand the content and methodology of psychology" (Perloff & Perloff, 1977, p. 220), noting that this tradition extended back to Francis Galton who set up his Anthropometric Laboratory at the International Health Exhibition at South Kensington (London) in 1884.

The APA *Monitor on Psychology* was launched in October 1970 as a short newsletter, but it grew rapidly, addressing both national and international issues relevant to psychology. Under the leadership of APA Chief Executive Officer Ray Fowler, the *Monitor* adopted a new format and became an archived publication in January 2000. Although primarily aimed at psychologists, the *Monitor* was also an

important public relations tool for the Association that became even more important when widespread dissemination became possible because of the Internet. Fowler (2000, p. 9) noted:

[T]he *Monitor* is also becoming an important means of giving psychology away to the world. Because it is on APA's home page, thousands of additional people now read stories about psychology and the association. Each week, APA's web site receives almost 2 million "hits," and a significant number are people who want to read the *Monitor*.

Recent APA presidents have echoed the earlier messages of Miller, Albee, and Clark about psychology's important role in educating the public. For example, President Frank Farley (1993) argued for the importance of "street science," noting "Public support for what we do in psychological science depends in part on street science, on people understanding in some coherent way what the science of psychology is and what it can do" (p. 11). The theme of Ron Levant's, 2005 presidential year was "Making Psychology a Household Word" (Levant, 2006), and President Nadine Kaslow echoed a similar theme in her 2014 Presidential Address:

Translating psychological science means conveying the message in a comprehensible, memorable, and relevant manner so the audience appreciates what it means and what difference the science makes. It entails communicating specific findings, providing lay interpretations of the results, discussing practical applications of the data, and sharing how we know what we know. (Kaslow, 2015, p. 361)

Growing Public Recognition of Psychology as a Profession and a Science

Television became widely available in the United States after World War II, and psychologists were quick to exploit this new medium. Doing so helped psychology become increasingly recognized as both a science and an academic discipline, and there were ever increasing references to psychology in popular literature. A new generation of radio and TV psychology celebrities included Joy Browne, Joyce Brothers, Laura Schlessinger, Lawrence Balter, Toni Grant, and, most recently and most successfully, Phillip McGraw (Friedland & Koenig, 1997; Mattimore, 2003).

The diminutive sex therapist Ruth Westheimer, better known as "Dr. Ruth," appeared several times on *Late Night with David Letterman*, and her radio program, *Sexually Speaking*, had a devoted radio listening audience. Psychologists such as Frank Farley (1993 APA President) and Judy Kuriensky were and are routinely interviewed on TV programs seen by millions of U.S. citizens, as well as international viewers, such as *Good Morning, America*, the *Today Show*, *Larry King Live*, the

Oprah Winfrey Show, and *20/20*, and on radio programs such as National Public Radio's (NPR's) *All Things Considered*. These interviews often address titillating topics such as former Congressman Anthony Weiner's aberrant behavior or Tiger Wood's alleged sexual addiction; most recently, they have focused on the anger, anxiety, and depression associated with the 2016 Presidential election.

Interest in psychology, as measured by citations to psychology in Google Books, peaked about 1970 and remained high until 1990; there has been a slight diminution of interest since that time (Figure 1). However, some psychologists became celebrity figures and household names during the 20th century. Burrhus Frederick (B. F.) Skinner is perhaps the best example (Shiraev, 2011); Skinner's popularity resulted in part from publication of provocative trade books (e.g., *Walden Two*, published in 1948, and *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, published in 1971). Two APA Presidents, Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, also wrote bestselling popular books (e.g., Rogers's *On Becoming a Person*, 1961, and Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 1962), as did existential psychologist Rollo May (e.g., *Love and Will*, 1969).

Psychiatrist Irvin Yalom is another example of a mental health professional who has successfully combined his professional identity with a robust literary life; his scholarly books on *Existential Psychotherapy* (1980) and *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* (2005) are classic works, while popular books like *Love's Executioner and Other Tales of Psychotherapy* (2012) and *When Nietzsche Wept: A Novel of Obsession* (2011) have sold millions of copies and been translated into dozens of languages.

Philip Zimbardo, Stanley Milgram, Albert Bandura, and Steven Pinker are four psychologists whose work has influenced public opinion and who are leading intellectual figures outside the halls of the academy. Zimbardo is perhaps best known for the Stanford Prison Experiment, popularized by a 2015 film of the same name (Dunn, 2016; Zimbardo, 2016). Another 2015 film directed by Michael Almereyda portrays the life and work of Stanley Milgram (Nicholson, 2016). Albert Bandura is well known for his seminal contributions to the science of psychology; however, the general public is most likely to know Bandura because of his National Medal of Science award and through his recent book on *Moral Disengagement: How People Do Harm and Live with Themselves* (Bandura, 2016; Sternberg, 2016). Harvard cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker is well known for his popular books *The Language Instinct* (1994), *How the Mind Works* (1997), *Words and Rules* (2000), *The Blank Slate* (2002), and *The Stuff of Thought* (2007); more recently, he has addressed the decline in violence in contemporary society in *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (2011), and

writing style and the issue of pomposity in academic publications in *The Sense of Style* (2014). Although these are eminent psychologists who shaped public views of our field, their work has been criticized by other professionals (e.g., Banuazizi & Movahedi, 1975; Ferguson, 2015; Griggs, 2014; Griggs & Whitehead, 2014).

The Golden Fleece Awards Damage Psychology

In 1975, Senator William Proxmire, a Democrat from Wisconsin, began giving out monthly “Golden Fleece” awards to organizations and agencies that he believed had wasted tax payer funds, and he continued the practice until 1988 when he retired from the Senate. The public image of psychology—and of science in general—suffered from these dubious awards (Shaffer, 1977). “[M]any scientists feel that when Proxmire picked on academia, his diatribe did more harm than good. The results, they claim, included misrepresented research, ruined projects, and a public increasingly alienated from a scientific community that supposedly squanders tax dollars” (Irion, 1988).

Psychology was particularly affected because the first of the awards went to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for an \$84,000 grant awarded to social psychologists Ellen Berscheid and Elaine Hatfield (née Walster) on the nature of passionate love and sexual desire. Proxmire’s press release noted:

I object to this not only because no one—not even the National Science Foundation—can argue that falling in love is a science; not only because I’m sure that even if they spend \$84 million or \$84 billion they wouldn’t get an answer that anyone would believe. I’m also against it because I do not want the answer. I believe that 200 million other Americans want to leave some things in life a mystery, and right on top of the things we do not want to know is why a man falls in love with a woman and vice versa. (Walster & Walster, 1978, p. viii)

The award received considerable public attention, and the merits and relevance of social science research were widely debated. Berscheid and Hatfield were defended by Senator Barry Goldwater, three University of Chicago Nobel Prize winners and *New York Times* columnist James Reston who wrote:

But if the sociologists and psychologists can get even a suggestion of the answer to our pattern of romantic love, marriage, disillusion, divorce—and the children left behind—it would be the best investment of federal money since Jefferson made the Louisiana purchase. (Hatfield, 2006, p. 16)

Although the notoriety associated with the awards may have tarnished the reputation of both science and psychology, the stature and standing of the scientists associated with the awards were not necessarily diminished. Hatfield, for example, went on to have a distinguished career at the University of Hawaii and become one of the most fre-

quently cited scientists in social psychology (Perlman, 1984).

Many other psychologists had their research ridiculed by Proxmire (e.g., Paul Ekman, Robert Kraut, and Robert Baron), and some have fought back. In 1976, psychologist Ronald Hutchinson sued Proxmire for libel after the federal agencies funding his research (the NSF, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Office of Naval Research) on jaw clenching in rats, monkeys, and humans received the second Golden Fleece award.

In a \$6 million lawsuit that eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court, Hutchinson charged Proxmire with defamation, invasion of privacy, loss of income, and infliction of mental cruelty. In 1979, before the Court was to hear the case, Proxmire settled for \$10,000, plus a far-reaching apology on the Senate floor. (Irion, 1988)

Proxmire had argued that scientists were “public figures” because of their federal funding and research publications, and therefore not protected by libel laws; two lower courts supported Proxmire’s position before the Supreme Court overruled the lower court decisions. Despite the attention this ruling received, Hutchinson never collected his money, his career was damaged, and he found it much more difficult to compete for federal grants after the Golden Fleece award was presented (Benson, 2006).

More recently Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK), a physician, and Jeff Flake (R-AZ) have used the trope of “Wastebooks” to ridicule social science research. Senator Flake’s December 2015 *Wastebook* is subtitled “The Farce Awakens,” includes *Star Wars* cartoon figures on the cover, and purports to report on wasteful federal spending, including “monkeys on treadmills . . . winemaking for minors, the science of beer cozies, . . . [and] dating secrets for the unattractive” (Flake, 2015).

In part because of public ridicule about psychological science, such as that engendered by the Golden Fleece awards and the Senate’s *Wastebooks*, even today the public remains wary about the relevance and value of psychological research. The APA Benchmark Study (Penn, Schoen, & Berland Associates, 2008) “found that 82% agreed that psychological research helps to improve people’s lives either ‘somewhat or a lot,’ . . . but “only a minority of participants appeared to view psychology as scientific” (Lilienfeld, 2012, p. 113).

APA’s Efforts to Educate the Public and Influence Public Opinion

The APA has been actively involved in public education, especially over the past 20 years. Some of the Association’s major public education campaigns include the following: *Talk to Someone Who Can Help*; *Teen Violence: The Road to Resilience*; *Resilience for Kids and Teens*; *Stress and Children: Mind/Body Health*; *the Psychologically Healthy*

Workplace; Science in Action; Stress in America; and a series of public service announcements on NPR. Many people have praised these campaigns and applauded the Association's efforts; other commentators have found some of the campaigns, and especially the "Warning Signs of School Violence" campaign, trite, banal, and platitudinous. One study tested the efficacy of the "Warning Signs" curriculum in an urban high school, but this investigation did not find differences between students exposed to the program and those who were not exposed (Schaefer-Schiumpo & Ginsberg, 2003).

The *Talk to Someone Who Can Help* public education campaign began in 1996 "at the behest of the Council of Representatives, which directed APA to develop a plan for a public education campaign that would educate the public about the value of psychological services and elevate psychology's visibility" (Campaign Background & History, 2016). APA Chief Executive Officer Norman Anderson noted:

APA's Council of Representatives initiated the association's first public education campaign in 1995. This original campaign, "Talk to Someone Who Can Help," focused on the value of psychological interventions and laid the groundwork for further public education initiatives. Our initial goal was to increase the public's awareness of the value of psychological services, of psychologists' unique training and credentials and of the mind-body connection. Over the years, the campaign evolved in response to world events, including teen violence, 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Anderson, 2012)

The 4-year *Talk to Someone Who Can Help* initiative was APA's response to a rash of school shootings in the 1990s. This initial effort led to a subsequent partnership with Music TV (MTV) to develop and promulgate "Warning Signs" to help students and teachers identify early precursors of potential violent behavior in troubled young people (Peterson & Newman, 2000). APA later worked with the Discovery Health TV channel to produce a documentary titled *Aftermath: The Road to Recovery and Resilience*. This film had three key messages: resilience can be learned; resilience is a journey, not an event or single turning point; and there is no prescribed timeline for the road to resilience, since everyone's process is different (Daw, 2002).

Psychologists, like all other U.S. citizens, were shaken by the events of September 11, 2001. In response, the APA Practice Directorate's *Road to Resilience* campaign was launched in August 2002. The campaign built on the efforts of hundreds of psychologists who held public forums and distributed information packets aimed at promoting resilience during periods of tremendous stress. These public forums often involved showing the documentary *Aftermath: The Road to Recovery and Resilience*, followed by public discussions of the film and its relevance to the lives of participants (Murray, 2003).

The *Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards* have received considerable media attention, and these awards underscore the relevance of the workplace to a healthy economy.

Local awards have been presented by state, territorial, and provincial associations each year since 1999 with support from the APA Center for Organizational Excellence, and more than 500 organizations have been recognized. In 2006 APA began presenting *National Psychologically Healthy Workplace* awards; in addition, best practice awards are presented to organizations that can demonstrate particularly innovative programs and policies.

The APA Council of Representatives reauthorized funding for the Public Education Campaign in 2010, with continued funding for the *Mind/Body Health Campaign* and the *Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards*. The *Mind/Body Health Campaign* was expanded to better educate the public about the role of psychology and behavior in health and wellness and the ways in which psychology informs health care service and delivery. In 2014 a new education campaign, *Psychology: Science to Action*, was initiated to educate the public about the wide variety of settings in which psychologists are employed (Campaign Background & History, 2016).

Since 2007, the APA has supported an annual *Stress in America* survey that generates considerable media attention. These surveys assess stress by gender and generation; in addition, they assess reports of health status, mental health status, sedentary hours, stress-related symptoms, and other parameters of stress. A special survey in 2016 was devoted to "election stress"; not surprisingly, the survey documented the highest levels of stress in the elderly (ages 71+), and in those who are heavy users of social media. The survey found slightly higher levels of election stress in Republicans than in Democrats, and men and women found the election equally stressful (APA, 2016). A press release reporting results from the 2017 survey documented an overall increase in stress levels for the first time in 10 years, most likely the result of the pervasive influence of social media.

[N]early four in 10 adults (38%) said that political and cultural discussions on social media caused them stress. In addition, adults who used social media were more likely than adults who did not use social media to say the election was a very or somewhat significant source of stress (54% vs. 45%, respectively). (APA, 2017, p. 1)

The APA also supports a media referral service to direct journalists to psychologists with particular expertise. This database currently includes information on more than 1,400 psychologists who have agreed to serve as content experts in response to media requests. During 2015, "staff made more than 3,000 referrals of APA member psychologists to comment on numerous issues, from gun violence to depression to consumer behaviors" (2015 Annual Report, p. S29).

The American Psychological Foundation (APF), an organization with an independent Board of Trustees but loosely associated with APA, exists to provide grants and scholarships for students and early career psychologists. The APF has been actively involved in promoting psychology for the general public, particularly through the *National Psychology Awards for Excellence in the Media*. These awards, presented annually at the APA convention from 1967–1990, were designed to recognize “outstanding performance in communicating psychology to the public” (*National Psychology Awards for Excellence in the Media*, 1989, p. 667). The awards covered various categories including sustained contribution, books, magazines, newspaper articles, TV shows (news-documentary and drama-entertainment), and radio programs. For example, Elaine Hatfield and Susan Sprecher shared the 1986 book award for writing *Mirror, Mirror: The Importance of Looks in Everyday Life*; psychologist and journalist Daniel Goleman received the sustained contribution award for his work in “contributing to the understanding of psychology through his writings in a wide array of popular, national publications, as well as books and audiotapes” (*National Psychology Awards for Excellence in the Media*, 1989, p. 667); and Lawrence Kutner received the newspaper award in 1990 for his weekly column in the *New York Times*.

Society for Media Psychology and Technology

The Division of Media Psychology (Division 46 of APA) was founded in 1986. The Division was renamed the APA Society for Media Psychology and Technology in 2012. The Society publishes a newsletter, *The Amplifier*, and it sponsors workshops and seminars each year at the annual APA convention. Many of the founders and early members were psychologists who were actively involved with media outlets (e.g., weekly radio or TV programs); more recent members have been early career psychologists conducting research exploring the use of technology and social media to disseminate psychological information.

The Division has clear links to communications studies and journalism, and a growing number of members conduct research investigating the ways in which beliefs, attitudes, and behavior are shaped by Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and similar social media. Facebook is the most popular social network worldwide, and it had approximately 1.8 billion active users in 2016 (*Statista*, 2016, November 13). It has become an important medium for educating the public about psychology and psychologists.

The Society for Media Psychology and Technology presents a number of awards, including an award for *Distinguished Lifetime Contributions to Media Psychology and Technology*; past recipients have included Lawrence Balter, Rowell Huesman, Stuart Fischhoff, Florence Kaslow, Lawrence Kutner, Lenore Walker, Dorothy Singer, Elaine

Rodino, Frank Farley, Bernard Luskin, Philip Zimbardo, and Richard Bedrosian. The Division also has a “Media Watch Committee” that selects and presents the *Shirley Glass Golden Psi Award* for positive “fictional media portrayals of mental health professionals in TV, film, electronic media and books.” Past recipients include the TV series *Chicago Hope*, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and *The Sopranos*. A list of the current and past presidents of the Society for Media Psychology and Technology is presented in Table 1.

APA on the Internet

The APA has been quick to exploit the world of opportunity that opened up with the explosion of interest in social media, and the January 2016 issue of the *APA Monitor on Psychology* was devoted to “Giving Psychology Away via Social Media.” This issue used one psychologist’s frustration to illustrate the speed, power and reach of social media.

Scrolling his Twitter feed over coffee in October, Ali Mattu, PhD, spotted an article that made his blood boil: Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush had told a crowd on the campaign trail that while psychology is a popular U.S. major, these students might make a greater contribution to society if

Table 1
Presidents of the Society for Media Psychology and Technology

Year	President
2017	Joanne Broder Sumerson, PhD
2016	Mary Gregerson, PhD
2015	Jerri Lynn Hogg, PhD
2014	Bernard J. Luskin, PhD
2013	Mary Alvord, PhD
2012	Phyllis Koch-Sheras, PhD
2011	Pauline Wallin, PhD
2010	David L. Shapiro, PhD
2009	Danny Wedding, PhD
2008	Frank Farley, PhD
2007	Rochelle M. Balter, PhD
2006	Charles D. Spielberg, PhD
2005	Peter L. Sheras, PhD
2004	Louis A. Perrott, PhD
2003	Elizabeth K. Carll, PhD
2002	Rhoda L. Fisher, PhD
2001	Lenore E. Walker, EdD
2000	Alan D. Entin, PhD
1999	Frank Farley, PhD
1998	Marion Gindes, PhD
1997	Elaine Rodino, PhD
1996	Irene M. Deitch, PhD
1995	Lilli R. Friedland, PhD
1994	Ellen McGrath, PhD
1993	Florence W. Kaslow, PhD
1992	Steve Brody, PhD
1991	Kate M. Wachs, PhD
1990	Lawrence Balter, PhD
1989	Jerry H. Clark, PhD
1988	Jacqueline C. Bouhoutsos, PhD
1987	Michael Broder, PhD
1986	Stuart Fischhoff, PhD

they pursued careers in such fields as welding or information technology. . . .

Five hours later, Mattu had written, filmed and starred in a 3-min video response full of facts on how valuable psychology is to the world. He uploaded the video to his YouTube channel, promoted it on his social media accounts and encouraged people to share how they use their psychology degrees with the hashtag #ThisPsychMajor. Within three days, the posting had generated 3 million impressions on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, with psychologists, psychology degree-holders and psychology students from all over the world promoting their contributions to society (Chamberlin, 2016, p. 40).

The APA 2015 Annual Report also documents the reach and impact of the Association on social media.

Social media followers on APA's main public sites increased 46% in 2015, giving APA a total audience of over 477,000 across our primary pages on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, and YouTube. APA's Facebook posts were seen by an average of over 106,000 people daily in 2015, with the largest single post seen by more than 375,000 people. APA's award-winning audio podcast, *Speaking of Psychology*, had nearly 2,800 subscribers at the end of 2015 and had been downloaded 130,000 times over the course of the year, nearly double the number of downloads in 2014. (2015 Annual Report, p. S28)

The APA Website

The APA website has to compete with numerous other sites that purport to offer accurate information about the science and practice of psychology (e.g., Wikipedia). However, the APA presence on the web is robust and helpful for the general public. In 2015, the APA site (apa.org) attracted over 39 million visitors who viewed almost 112 million pages. The website also provided live video streaming for President Barry Anton's presidential summit, "Global Approaches to Integrated Health Care" (2015 Annual Report).

Other Psychology Sites

Social Psychology Network (SPN). The SPN (socialpsychology.org) was founded by psychologist Scott Plous in 1996 with three affiliated partner sites: the Society of Experimental Social Psychology (SESP.org); the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP.org); and Research Randomizer (Randomizer.org, a Web-based tool for random sampling and random assignment; *Social Psychology Network*, 2016). SPN currently has over 4,000 members worldwide. The site has received funding from the NSF for 18 years, and it is viewed more than 20 thousand times each day by people from over 100 countries (*Social Psychology Network*, 2016). The site is attractive, actively managed, and interesting, and it has clearly influenced the public's perception of psychology.

Association for Psychological Science (APS). The APS (formerly the American Psychological Society) was founded in 1988 to represent the science of psychology. The organization was founded by prominent members of the psychological science community who felt their interests were not well represented by the APA. APS advocates for psychological science and works to disseminate psychological research. One of the APS journals, *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, specifically targets ways in which the science of psychology is relevant to the general public. The website has some features that are only available to APS members; however, there is considerable information available to anyone visiting the site (psychologicalscience.org), and psychologists will find the interviews featured on "Inside the Psychologist's Studio" particularly interesting. (These are engaging interviews with some of the world's most important psychologists, including Elliot Aronson, Albert Bandura, Linda Bartoshuk, Gordon Bower, Daniel Kahneman, Elizabeth Loftus, Steven Pinker, Michael Posner, Claude Steele, Janet Taylor Spence, et al.)

The Nobel Prize and the National Medal of Science Awards

The Nobel prizes generate considerable media attention each year, and often members of the public with little interest in science will take time to recognize and read about the significant work of those scientists chosen for these awards. Although there is no award for psychology per se, a number of individuals, including those with and without formal training in psychology, have received Nobel prizes for their contributions to psychological science.

Ivan Pavlov received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1904. Although Pavlov's academic training was in physiology, he is widely regarded as a psychologist because of his seminal research on classical conditioning. His Nobel biography notes that the year before he received the prize, Pavlov had presented a paper titled "The Experimental Psychology and Psychopathology of Animals."

Georg von Békésy documented how the inner ear converts vibrations into neural impulses. His PhD was awarded in physics in 1923 from the University of Budapest; however, his work was clearly relevant to psychophysiology, and he was a member of the faculty of the Department of Psychology at Harvard when he received the 1961 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. After von Békésy reached Harvard's mandatory retirement age in 1962, he moved to the University of Hawaii where he continued his research until his death in 1972.

Roger Sperry received the 1981 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for his work with split brain patients (the award was shared with David H. Hubel and Torsten N. Wiesel for their research on visual perception). Much of this work was conducted with Sperry's psychology graduate assistant, Michael Gazzaniga (Puente, 2016). Sperry received a master's

degree in psychology from Oberlin University; however, his doctorate was awarded in zoology from the University of Chicago in 1941. Despite academic training in zoology, Sperry closely identified with the profession of psychology, and he remains one of the most widely cited psychologists (Haggbloom et al., 2002).

Two psychologists have received the Nobel Prize in economics. Herbert A. Simon, an APA Fellow, received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1978 for his work in decision making and bounded rationality. Simon's PhD was awarded in political science from the University of Chicago, but he was the Richard King Mellon Professor of Computer Science and Psychology at Carnegie Mellon University for much of his career. In 1993, Simon was presented the *APA Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Psychology*.

Psychologist Daniel Kahneman received the 2002 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences (shared with Vernon L. Smith) for his research on human judgment and decision-making. Much of this work was conducted with his longtime collaborator, Amos Tversky. Kahneman received his PhD in Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley, before beginning a distinguished career teaching at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the University of British Columbia, and Princeton University. Kahneman's influence as a public intellectual was enhanced by the enthusiastic reception of his 2011 book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Reviewing for *PsycCRITIQUES*, Bill Holcomb wrote:

This book is a marvelous overview of the experimental psychology of judgment and decision that educates the public regarding application of the scientific method in psychology and should excite students and professional psychologists alike about the contribution that we can make to better the human condition. (Holcomb, 2012)

In 2014, psychologist John O'Keefe shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with two other psychologists, May-Britt Moser and Edvard Ingjald Moser. They were recognized for their work in identifying and describing place neurons in the hippocampus (sometimes referred to as the brain's "inner GPS"). O'Keefe earned a PhD in physiological psychology at McGill University in Montreal, working under the supervision of Ronald Melzack. O'Keefe was a mentor for the Mosers, who were one of only five couples to have won a Nobel Prize.

A more detailed and scholarly description of the Nobel Prize and those psychologists who have received it is available in Benjamin (2003). This article is especially interesting in its description of the numerous (unsuccessful) nominations Sigmund Freud received. Readers who want to learn more about the work of Daniel Kahneman will be interested in a best-selling book by Michael Lewis, *The Undoing Project: A Friendship That Changed Our Minds*, which describes the fecund intellectual and academic partnership that existed between Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (Kazdin, 2017).

Although not as well known as the Nobel prizes, the *National Medal of Science* is one of the country's most prestigious awards. The President of the United States presents the awards each year to scientists who have made important contributions to the advancement of science in one of six fields, one of which is "Behavioral and Social Sciences." The award solidifies psychology's position as a serious scientific discipline, and it typically results in both national and international attention. Psychologists were not originally included in the list of those eligible for the awards, but lobbying efforts by the APA and the American Association for the Advancement of Science eventually resulted in the inclusion of behavioral and social sciences as a recognized scientific discipline. ("Although three psychologists [B. F. Skinner, Harry Harlow and Neal Miller] have won the award, they did so as biologists, since the legislation creating the award specifies that it can be given only to physical, biological, mathematical and engineering scientists," *APA Briefly, Medal of Science*, 1980, p. 35). Those psychologists who have been presented the *National Medal of Science* are listed in Table 2. Lowman and Benjamin (2012) provide a more detailed description of the National Medal of Science, and they describe APA Past President Harry Harlow's role in getting psychology recognized as a relevant scientific discipline.

A few psychologists also have influenced public opinion not by awards but by virtue of their position in important government offices. For example, Alan Leshner was influential in his role as Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), but likely had even more impact on public opinion when he served as chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In this role, he was responsible for *Science*, a scholarly journal read by more than one million people worldwide. It is interesting to note that two other psychologists have served important roles in AAAS: James McKeen Cattell, APA's 1895 President,

Table 2
Psychologists Who Have Received the National Medal of Science

Year	Psychologist
2014	Albert Bandura, PhD
2011	Anne Treisman, DPhil
2009	Mortimer Mishkin, PhD
2008	Michael I. Posner, PhD
2005	Gordon Bower, PhD
2003	R. Duncan Luce, PhD*
1997	William Kaye Estes, PhD
1995	Roger N. Shepard, PhD
1992	Eleanor J. Gibson, PhD
1991	George A. Miller, PhD
1987	Anne Anastasi, PhD
1986	Herbert A. Simon, PhD
1968	B. F. Skinner, PhD
1964	Neal E. Miller, PhD

* Luce received his PhD in mathematics from MIT; however, he was regarded as one of the world's leading mathematical psychologists.

edited *Science* for nearly 50 years, and APA's first CEO, Dael Wolfle, PhD, served as AAAS chief executive officer from 1956–1970 (Chamberlin, 2002).

TV and Movie Portrayals of Psychologists and Psychiatrists

While scholarly books and Nobel prizes shape public opinion about our profession and our science, it is clear that TV and movie portrayals of psychologists and other mental health professionals have the greatest impact on public attitudes (Niemi & Wedding, 2014; Wedding & Niemi, 2014). For example, Bob Newhart's TV role as Robert Hartley, PhD, a Chicago psychologist, introduced millions of viewers to the role of a psychologist as practitioner starting in 1972. Hartley shared his office with a dentist, and in many ways his character paved the way for full public acceptance of clinical psychology as a legitimate health profession.

In 1982, the program *Cheers* introduced Kelsey Grammer as psychiatrist Frasier Crane, a likable but hapless psychoanalyst with numerous problems of his own. The show ran for 11 seasons (1982–1993). Somewhat later, Lorraine Bracco played a psychiatrist, Dr. Jennifer Melfi, on the HBO series *The Sopranos*. The series ran from 1999–2007 and included numerous episodes depicting psychotherapy sessions with Tony Soprano, some of which highlighted Melfi's challenges with countertransference and ethics.

Other programs have portrayed psychologists as profilers and experts on criminal behavior. Examples include Dr. Spencer Reid on the show *Criminal Minds* and Dr. George Huang in *Law and Order SVU*. Reid's character, a former child prodigy who works for the FBI, holds numerous doctorates, including one in psychology.

There are hundreds of movies that portray psychologists or other mental health professionals (often without clearly identifying the professional identity of the therapist being portrayed), and these films shape the public's perception of both the profession and the science of psychology (Wedding & Niemi, 2014). Early examples include *Spellbound* (1945), *The Snake Pit* (1948), *Psycho* (1960), *David and Lisa* (1962), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), *Equus* (1977), *Ordinary People* (1980), *The Prince of Tides* (1991), *What About Bob* (1991), *Mr. Jones* (1993), *The Road to Wellville* (1994), *Good Will Hunting* (1997), *Happiness* (1998), *Analyze This* (1999), and *Girl, Interrupted* (1999). More recent examples include *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), *Running with Scissors* (2006), *It's Kind of a Funny Story* (2010), *The Sessions* (2012), *Cake* (2014), *Love and Mercy* (2014), and *Welcome to Me* (2014). *Love and Mercy*, a biographical film, is a particularly troubling movie because it portrays an unethical psychologist treating and manipulating Brian Wilson, lead singer for the Beach Boys. Harvard psychologist E. G. Boring understood and appreciated the impact films had on the public's view of psychologists and the patients they treated, and he included

film reviews as well as book reviews in early issues of *Contemporary Psychology*; film reviews were reintroduced when the paper version of *Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books* morphed into the online database *PsycCRITIQUES* (Wedding, 2005). *PsycCRITIQUES* is being discontinued by APA, and the last issue of this venerable publication will be released in December 2017.

Psychologists in the Media

Joy Browne

Dr. Joy Browne was a licensed clinical psychologist who received a doctorate in psychology from Northeastern University in Boston in 1972. Leaving a successful independent practice, she became a nationally syndicated talk show host who was estimated to have a radio audience of between 3 and 5 million listeners a day (Friedland & Koenig, 1997). Browne was also a popular "pop psychology" author who wrote numerous books including *Nobody's Perfect: Advice for Blame-free Living* (1988), *Why They Do not Call When They Say They Will—And Other Mixed Signals* (1989), *The Nine Fantasies That Will Ruin Your Life (And the Eight Realities That Will Save You)* (1998), *It's a Jungle Out There, Jane: Understanding the Male Animal* (1999), *Getting Unstuck: Eight Simple Steps to Solving Any Problem* (2002), and *Dating for Dummies* (2011). As with other early radio talk show hosts, Browne was criticized for dealing with complex psychological issues in a superficial manner; however, by 1996 she was being praised in the *APA Monitor on Psychology* as the nation's "best female radio host" (*Monitor on Psychology*, 1996).

Joyce Brothers

Dr. Joyce Brothers was the face of psychology for many Americans, and one biographer called her "an essential thread woven into the fabric of American and popular culture" (Collins, 2016, p. xiii). She began her celebrity career as a contestant on a TV quiz show, *The \$64,000 Question*, eventually winning the top \$64,000 prize by demonstrating her expertise answering questions about boxing. Although her PhD from Columbia University was in physiological psychology, she found that most of the questions posed to her involved communication, interpersonal relations, love, sex, and child rearing. In her obituary, published in the *American Psychologist*, Frank Farley called her the "Walter Cronkite of psychology," and noted,

Her public popularity as the face of psychology is perhaps best shown by the guest statistics of the long-running Tonight Show hosted by Johnny Carson on NBC-TV. During Carson's 30-year tenure, Joyce Brothers appeared on the show 90 times, placing her among the top eight most frequent guests. She had become a Hollywood figure, living in the media, producing a cornucopia of popular magazine articles and advice columns (e.g., a four-

decades-long column for *Good Housekeeping* magazine), several TV shows under her name, and numerous books and radio and TV interviews. (Farley, 2014, p. 550)

At the peak of her popularity, Brothers received more than a thousand letters a week from listeners, and “she broke taboos by discussing frigidity, impotence, sexual satisfaction and menopause on a broadcast medium” (Shattuc, 1997, p. 30).

Laura Schlessinger

Laura Schlessinger, known widely as “Dr. Laura,” was not a psychologist, although this was a common misconception. She was initially trained at Columbia University where she received a PhD in physiology in 1974, writing her dissertation on the effects of insulin on rats. She later went on to receive training in marriage and family counseling at the University of Southern California, and she practiced part-time as a licensed marriage and family counselor. However, she eventually gave up practice as her popularity as a radio personality burgeoned. She has had a controversial career that has included nude Internet photos, accusations of infidelity, documented on air racial slurs, conversion to Judaism, public support for reparative therapy for homosexuals, and criticism for misleading radio listeners about her qualifications and training. However, her success and influence are unquestionable: At the peak of her popularity, Schlessinger was estimated to have had approximately 18 million listeners (Lilienfeld, 2002), and she sold ownership of her radio show in 1997 for over 71 million dollars (Weiten, 2006).

Phil McGraw

Phil McGraw is the most recent, and arguably the most successful, media psychologist. He began his TV career as a guest on Oprah Winfrey’s popular daytime show, eventually—with her support—developing his own show. His daily program is highly regarded by the general public, and in many ways “Dr. Phil” has become the current “public face of psychology.” McGraw views his work as public education rather than psychotherapy or psychological counseling, and he employs a 12-person advisory board of physicians, nurses, and psychologists (Meyers, 2006). However, the interactions between McGraw and his guests are sometime reminiscent of *The Jerry Springer Show*, and they are often titillating (e.g., the October 17, 2016, broadcast was devoted to an interview with a female schoolteacher having an illicit and illegal affair with a 17-year-old boy. Dr. Phil’s comment was “You’ve got to be dumber than a box of rocks”). In January 2008, the APA Public Affairs Office issued a press release addressing a possible breach of ethics by McGraw in his public evaluation and diagnosis of Britney Spears. The press release notes,

For some people, seeking mental health care is a daunting task. They may not be able to afford it or they might believe it is

stigmatizing to seek care for mental health problems. For others, there may be mobility barriers. For these people, information about mental health issues delivered via the media may be their only source of such information—or it may encourage them to find the resources (emotional, financial and physical) to access care. (Media Psychologists, 2008)

Rasmussen and Ewoldsen (2013) analyzed episodes of *Dr. Phil* and issues of *Psychology Today* and found that depression was the mental illness most frequently discussed, and psychotherapy was the treatment most often recommended. In a subsequent study, these authors found that “frequent viewing of Dr. Phil was associated with . . . greater efficacy beliefs in treating a mental illness of oneself and of one’s child, which was ultimately related to greater intentions to seek treatment” (Rasmussen & Ewoldsen, 2016, p. 611).

Despite controversy related to a lack of scientific rigor (e.g., uncritical endorsement of the polygraph and the inclusion of self-proclaimed psychics on his show), the APA has somewhat reluctantly embraced McGraw. In 2006, he was presented with a Presidential Citation by then APA President Gerald Koocher that noted, “Your work has touched more Americans than any other living psychologist” (Meyers, 2006).

Controversies That Received Public Attention

Specific psychological research studies occasionally receive widespread public attention, but this is not always a positive event. For example, a peer-reviewed and seemingly innocuous meta-analysis published in *Psychological Bulletin* in 1998 assessed the degree of self-reported harm that resulted from child sexual abuse (Rind, Tromovitch & Bauserman, 1998). Controversy erupted after talk show host Laura Schlessinger dismissed the research as “junk science,” and the study was criticized on the floor of the House of Representatives by Congressman Tom DeLay, a Texas Republican who went on to become House Majority Leader. DeLay demanded—and received—an apology from the APA, and the association was widely criticized for allowing the study to be published, despite the scientific integrity of the findings.

In an cogent analysis published in the *American Psychologist*, Scott Lilienfeld noted that the study raised four critical questions for the APA: (a) authors’ responsibilities concerning the reporting of politically controversial findings, (b) academic and scientific freedom, (c) the role of the APA in disabusing the public and media of logical errors and fallacies, and (d) the substantial gap between popular and academic psychology and the responsibility of the APA to narrow that gap (Lilienfeld, 2002). Lilienfeld’s paper was initially accepted, then rejected, and then accepted again after several eminent psychological scientists protested (e.g., APA Past President Paul Meehl threatened to withdraw from the Association if the paper was not accepted).

More recently, Daryl Bem (2011) published a study suggesting that experimental subjects could predict the future

occurrence of events before the events actually occurred (i.e., the presence of precognition). This controversial and anomalous finding was replicated nine times in Bem's research, supported with accepted statistical analyses (the effect sizes were small but reliable), and respected peer reviewers vetted the paper. The fact that the study was published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, one of the APA's most prestigious and most competitive journals, compounded the resulting furor. Other researchers have failed to replicate Bem's findings (e.g., Galak, LeBoeuf, Nelson, & Simmons, 2012), and James Alcock published a compelling and highly critical analysis of Bem's study in *The Skeptical Inquirer* (Alcock, 2011); however, the press and popular media outlets enthusiastically responded to the original story that supported the public's fascination with psi phenomena.

The repeated failures to replicate Bem's findings triggered what has come to be called a "replication crisis" in psychology (Ferguson, 2015; Wagenmakers, Wetzels, Borsboom, & van der Maas, 2011); this issue has been picked up and widely reported in the popular literature, undermining the public's confidence in psychological research (Berezow, 2012; Gutting, 2012).

The APA decision to purchase *Psychology Today* in 1967 illustrates many of the dilemmas that confront a scientific organization attempting to influence public attitudes via popular media outlets. The magazine had been widely read and it was successful, but much of its financial success was related to alcohol and tobacco advertising; once these sources of revenue were eliminated, the magazine quickly started to lose money for the association. APA sold *Psychology Today* on May 11, 1988 to T. George Harris and Owen Lipstein for \$6.5 million, staunching yearly losses of about \$4.5 million (Fischer, 1988). APA Council had devoted 3 days to debating the purchase: "Although members appeared nearly unanimous in their belief that the magazine could help the association convey to the public a better understanding of psychology, opponents argued that the financial risks of such a venture were considerable" (Mervis, 1983, p. 13). Unfortunately, the skeptical critics were prescient and correct.

Another controversy occurred when the American Psychological Foundation decided to award Raymond B. Cattell the Association's highest honor, the *Gold Medal Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Science of Psychology*. Cattell was 92 years old at the time of his nomination; however, because of concerns about possible racist and fascist ideas espoused by Cattell early in his career, a blue ribbon panel was appointed to review the award decision. Cattell withdrew his name from consideration and died before the panel reached a conclusion about the merits of the award (Tucker, 2009).

Occasionally, an APA task force report will garner widespread media attention, and this was the case with the APA Task Force on Violent Media (Calvert et al., 2017). The Task

Force found an association between violent videogame exposure and "an increased composite aggression score; increased aggressive behavior; increased aggressive cognitions; increased aggressive affect, increased desensitization, and decreased empathy; and increased physiological arousal," (p. 126), but there was insufficient evidence to suggest a direct link between violent video games and delinquency or criminal behavior. These findings have been controversial. More than 230 scholars signed a letter that was highly critical of the report, calling it "misleading and alarmist" and claiming it "delineated several strong conclusions on the basis of inconsistent or weak evidence" (Wofford, 2015).

Finally, the controversy surrounding APA's Independent Review (i.e., the "Hoffman Report") has received widespread attention in the popular press, and it is clear that the Association's image and its budget have been damaged by the report. In addition, two bestselling books have been written that criticize psychologists' involvement with "enhanced interrogation" of detainees: *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned Into a War on American Ideals* by Jane Mayer (2008) and *Pay Any Price: Greed, Power, and Endless War* (2014) by James Risen.

The two controversial research studies, the decision to purchase *Psychology Today*, the Cattell controversy, the videogame task force findings, and the Independent Review all illustrate unintended consequences as well as the ways in which public attitudes can be influenced and damaged by good intentions and seemingly innocuous decisions. Psychology also is dealing with a replication crisis (Ferguson, 2015) that has been widely reported, and public confidence in the science of psychology has been undermined. However, both the APA and individual psychologists have heretofore done a credible job influencing public opinion, and psychologists and psychology are generally viewed favorably by the public (Mills, 2009). If psychology is going to be regarded as a relevant and important scientific discipline, it is imperative that psychologists and our various professional organizations continue to actively work to educate the public about the research done by psychologists and its relevance to the everyday life of ordinary citizens.

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