

Introduction

Founders' forum

Last fall, the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences (APLS) celebrated its 30th anniversary by holding the annual meeting on the picturesque campus of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. The event was highlighted not only by a keynote address from Nobel Prize Laureate Elinor Ostrom but also featured several roundtables comprised of those most responsible for the establishment and growth of APLS over the past three decades. This Founders' Forum likewise celebrates 30 years of the journal's publication and provides the opportunity to reflect on where the field and the association have been, and where they are headed.

The resulting collection of 12 short essays disclose the experiences of many (alas, not all) founders, whose scholarly risk-taking often moved them to the periphery of their own departments and disciplines—but to the forefront of knowledge generation. Whether these lines of inquiry were carried out by established or nascent researchers, their choices left a lasting legacy. That these scholars persevered in posing the difficult questions at the intersection of politics and biology, particularly in light of prevailing orthodoxies within their established disciplines, bears witness to their academic integrity and intellectual foresight.

While the essays published here are presented in alphabetical order, they may be viewed as clustering into distinct categories. The pieces by Joe Losco, Steve Peterson and Al Somit proffer biobehavioral perspectives as the most promising approach to the big questions of political inquiry.

The essays by Bob Blank, Bill Brandon, Odelia Funke, and Amy Fletcher delve into the realm of biopolitics to consider the influence of biopolitical perspectives on applied issues, presciently identified three decades ago, that remain pressing concerns today. Blank revisits his classic article, "Biopolitics: A Restatement of Its Role in Politics and the Life Sciences," to assess how well goals articulated in the first issue of *Politics and the Life Sciences* are being met today, while Brandon and Funke reflect on their

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experiences with the health services and environmental security policy arenas, respectively. In her synthesis essay, Fletcher reviews the contributions made by Blank, Andrea Bonnicksen, and Keith Caldwell.

David Goetze, the most recent APLS Executive Director, provides insight and perspective into the path taken by the association over the past two decades and ruminates about future directions. As Goetze notes, the organization now faces choices given that what was a "boundary discipline," namely, politics and the life sciences, is becoming more a part of the mainstream in political science and policy studies.

Finally, the essays by Peter Corning concerning his paradigmatic "synergism hypothesis" and John Orbell and Roshani Shay's appraisal of James Davies' predictive "J-Curve" recap the influence these enduring ideas have had on understanding politics at multiple levels. Rounding out the forum are Anton Wohler's reflection on James Schubert's research, particularly his application of ethological approaches to political analysis, and Elliott White's reconsideration of his IMPPISH perspective.

Although the authors in this forum present a broad array of perspectives, there remains much to be covered and the representation of important biopolitical researchers is far from complete. In the fall issue of the journal, Gary Johnson, former *PLS* editor and APLS executive director, will offer his views on the evolution of the field and respond to the issues raised in these founding essays. Gary is uniquely situated to reflect on the broader trends in politics and the life sciences and we look forward to his reflections and assessments.

Alas, not every founding member we would have liked to contribute to this forum was able to—several founders were either too humble to consider their contributions worthy of reflection or too engaged in current projects to take a thoughtful look back. And sadly, as time and mortality spares none, several of the association's early leading lights have passed away, leaving behind fond memories and important intellectual traces that continue to shape research agendas today.

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Through this special forum, we pay homage to the intellectual past and look optimistically to the future of politics and the life sciences research. In remembrance, we would like to honor those who founded and nurtured APLS, including the members of the original steering committee: Carol Barner-Barry, Lynton Caldwell, Corning, Fred Kort, Roger Masters, Steven Peterson, Glendon Schubert, Albert Somit, and Thomas Weigele; the original editorial advisory board of the journal: the above founders, plus Robert Blank, James Davies, David Easton, Heiner Flohr, Odelia Funke, Samuel M. Hines, Jean Laponce, James N. Schubert,

John Wahlke, Meredith Watts, Elliott White, and Raymond Zilinskas; and, the previous editors of *Politics and the Life Sciences*: Thomas Wiegeler, Gary Johnson, and Robert Hunt Sprinkle.

All contributed significantly to the cause of understanding of how biological approaches, whether bio-behavioral, biopolicy, or bioethical, influence politics and policy.

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