

Festschrift for Ezra E.H. Griffith, MD, Editor

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J Am Acad Psychiatry Law 46:410–12, 2018. DOI:10.29158/JAAPL.003802-18

At the October 2017 annual meeting of the Editorial Board in Denver, Dr. Griffith informed the Board members that the next year would be his last as Editor of the *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* (JAAPL). He had decided not to seek re-appointment when his fourth term as Editor ended in December 2018.

Board members expressed their individual appreciation for his 20 years of leadership of *The Journal* and how meaningful it had been to have the opportunity to serve on the JAAPL Board under his stewardship. People were torn between their desire to continue to comment on how much they valued having been part of the Griffith era of *The Journal* and their wish not to embarrass Ezra. They were also eager to embrace the next year of work with him on *The Journal* and not indulge in any premature closures.

At the end of the meeting agenda, one of the members raised the idea of creating a tribute to Ezra in *The Journal*, and we quickly began discussing suggestions for a special issue to commemorate his many contributions to the field of forensic psychiatry, to AAPL, and to its *Journal*. While we did not get into specific details at the meeting, we held enough discussion to be sure that Ezra was not opposed to the idea and that he could accept his colleagues' esteem and appreciation graciously, even if reluctantly.

We did, however, settle on two basic frames for the special issue. The first was that we would try to honor

the exchange of ideas and areas of scholarship that had been most important to Ezra throughout his career. The second was that we would feature Ezra's interest in expanding the departments of *The Journal* and his commitment to encouraging new ways for scholars to share and express their ideas in its pages. Thus, we agreed to include in each department of the tribute issue at least one article that either described Ezra's specific contributions to forensic psychiatry or that honored areas of his scholarly endeavors in the field. Several Board members volunteered for the departments for which they would craft a submission.

But we would not abandon *The Journal's* usual scholarly mission for the special issue, and thus we were faced with the task of melding articles in the normal queue with the special festschrift contributions. This mandated an esthetic decision about how to structure this issue and then explain it so that it made sense. Because of Dr. Griffith's championing of the department structure of JAAPL and his constant dedication to expanding and strengthening it, we decided not to separate the festschrift pieces into a section of their own, but to have them stand proudly in their proper departments. I will briefly outline these special contributions. They are each designated as part of the festschrift on their opening page. Dr. Griffith's own reflections immediately follow this opening introduction.

In the Editorial department, we have two special contributions. Robert Trestman examines the various stages of the criminal justice system in relation to the experience of nondominant groups.¹ This is a fitting opening to the festschrift given the importance of this topic to Dr. Griffith's work, which will

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Disclosures of financial or other potential conflicts of interest: None.

be obvious from several of the other contributors as well. Dr. Trestman proposes a “sequential intercept” approach to responding to racial and ethnic disparities at each of the phases of the criminal justice system. Jackie Coleman, *JAAPL*’s Managing Editor throughout Ezra’s tenure as Editor, has contributed an editorial on the importance of respect for the reader²—a principle that has been the foundation of so many of the discussions held among the senior editors and the directions chosen for *The Journal*’s ongoing development.

At the start of the millennium, Dr. Griffith created the Biography department of *The Journal* and the tradition of publishing a biography of AAPL’s incoming president in the first issue of each volume of *The Journal*. There was thus no biography of Dr. Griffith when he served as President in 1996–1997. Thanks to John Young, this deficiency has now been rectified with the very lovely and personal narrative he has offered.³

There are two festschrift contributions among the Regular Articles. Richard Martinez has crafted an account of Dr. Griffith’s role in the evolution of ethics in forensic psychiatry and the development of cultural, narrative, and performance perspectives on forensic work.⁴ He characterizes Ezra’s body of work as a bridge to the future of forensic psychiatry. Navneet Sidhu and Philip Candilis have contributed a feminist perspective on forensic ethics and praxis as one of the pieces that further develop an area of Dr. Griffith’s scholarly interest.⁵ They advocate the default position of favoring the vulnerable individual in forensic work, amid the context of recent sociocultural developments.

In an Analysis & Commentary article, Kenneth Weiss and Neha Gupta explore the use of the insanity defense in an 1846 New York State case involving interracial homicide and the defense argument of racist maltreatment as precipitant to the murders.⁶ They follow the echoes of this case into 20th-century legal discussions of “black rage.”

Two of Dr. Griffith’s associates present their reflections about his mentorship in the Reflections and Narratives department. Reena Kapoor describes the importance to her professional life and development of Dr. Griffith’s early supervision and subsequent conversations on matters of race and culture.⁷ In it, she reveals a remarkable letter she handwrote to Ezra but never shared with him—until now. Charles Dike also shares Dr. Griffith’s extraordinary influ-

ence on his professional development through his supervision and mentorship in teaching and administrative leadership.⁸ He describes Ezra’s encouragement, seasoned with his insistence on doing the hard work necessary to achieve excellence.

In the Legal Digest department, Jennifer Piel assigned two cases for review that were related to subjects of interest in Dr. Griffith’s career. These are the cases *City of Seattle v. Erickson*⁹ (on racial bias in jury selection) and *People v. Buza*¹⁰ (on DNA testing of arrestees in California, where African-Americans are overrepresented among thousands of DNA profiles that are retained without legal basis), which have been placed at the opening of the Legal Digest department.^{11,12}

Under Books and Media, Graham Glancy has authored a review of Dr. Griffith’s 2018 edited volume, *Ethics Challenges in Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology Practice*.¹³ Before getting into his review of Dr. Griffith’s textbook, Dr. Glancy discusses his conflicts of interest in writing the review, which has been an enduring area of concern in Ezra’s editorial work on *The Journal*.

The final department has its premier in this issue of *The Journal*, a fitting concluding tribute to Ezra’s focus on the expansion of departments and the exploration of new ways of communicating and exchanging ideas in the academic market place. Kenneth Weiss, Michelle Joy, and Claudia Li have created a serialized graphic history of the insanity defense, the first chapter of which appears within.¹⁴ This novel effort may perhaps be surprising to readers, but I expect it will become useful to education about forensic psychiatry in many settings. Dr. Weiss has also pointed out to me that the use of graphic storytelling dates to antiquity¹⁵; while there may be nothing new under the sun, this is something new at *The Journal*.

Let me end this introduction on a personal note. It has been an extraordinary privilege to serve as Deputy Editor alongside Ezra (and the rest of the team) these last 15 years. During this time, I have learned a great deal from the many discussions, dilemmas, disputes, and debates (the four D’s of journal editing) that have been the grist for Ezra’s commitment to excellence at *The Journal*. When Ezra retired from Yale a few years ago, he managed to evade efforts at holding a festschrift to celebrate the occasion, despite the Chair’s vow to accomplish such an event regardless of Ezra’s reluctance. I am enormously pleased that we have been able to compile this festschrift of scholarship in tribute to Ezra’s advancement of our field

and of the quality of *The Journal*. I hope you will enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

Acknowledgments

Dr. Noroko acknowledges the support of the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

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