



## **APTA Academy of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary PT Celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2025!**

**Historical Perspective:** This is the FIRST of 12 historical perspectives for the year 2025 which is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Cardiopulmonary Section (Now the Academy of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Physical Therapy). Each month we will highlight different aspects of our history, and this month we focus on how the Section was started, the key individuals involved in the founding of the Section, and the very first Executive Board. We will feature key members by asking them 5 questions about their involvement. We hope you enjoy learning about how the Section got started and the important individuals involved in our history.

### **How the Cardiopulmonary Section got started:**

The Cardiopulmonary Section was formally recognized by the APTA House of Delegates at the Annual Conference in Anaheim in June 1975. This recognition was achieved primarily through the efforts of a woman by the name of May Watros. Ms. Watros completed and submitted the petition to form a section to the Board

of Directors in 1975. Unbeknownst to Ms. Watros, another individual, Suzanne Gibson, was soliciting signatures on a petition to start a Cardiopulmonary Section.

Ms. Watros had been trained as a “chest physical therapist” in England prior to moving to the U.S. She was disturbed by the encroachment of inhalation therapists into physical therapy and by the lack of training of entry level therapists in the areas of cardiopulmonary care. Ms. Gibson was involved with the American Lung Association and wanted a section to address the needs of individuals who had lung disease. Both Ms. Watros and Ms. Gibson created the new section and then told the executive board to “do something about these problems”.

The first meeting of the Cardiopulmonary Section was held immediately following the House of Delegates action. The outcome of that meeting was the election of officers, establishment of goals, and general discussion about the current status of cardiopulmonary physical therapy. There was a grand total of 25 section members! The dues were set at \$12 annually. The initial goals were to: 1) establish a nationwide network of communication (Newsletter), 2) to develop a program for Mid-Winter meeting (later called Combined Sections Meeting) scheduled for February, 1976 in Washington, D.C., 3) promote cardiopulmonary education (in PT schools and clinics, and for the public), 4) develop liaison with the governmental affairs division of the APTA. By the end of the year (1975), the computerized membership list had soared to 89 and the Cardiopulmonary Section put on our first MidWinter program. Also in that year and early in 1976, a request was made to have Scot Irwin participate as a member of the Task Force on Specialization.

**First Executive Board:**

President: Scot Irwin

VP: Bob Huhn

Secretary: Terrie Faye

Treasurer: Phillip Schwartz

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Program Chair: Michael Davis  
Newsletter Editor: Peggy Wilhorte



**Scot Irwin** was the first President of the Cardiopulmonary Section in 1975 and one of the first Cardiopulmonary Clinical Specialists. Scot received his BS in Physical Therapy from University of California San Francisco in 1970, his Master of Arts in Physical Education from California State University, Long Beach in 1978 and his DPT from USC in 1998.

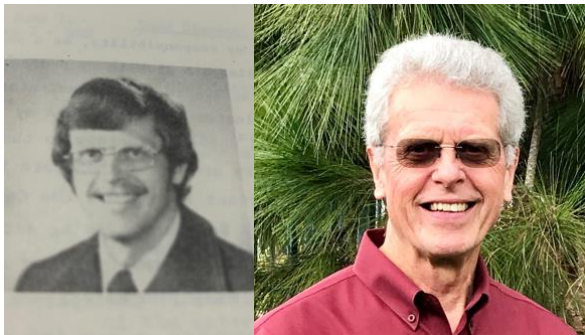
Scot Irwin started his long career in Physical Therapy at Rancho Los Amigos in Los Angeles, California, and then left Rancho when he developed a private practice partnership with Ray Blessey, Randy Ice and Bob Huhn which they named SCOR (Specialized Cardiac Outpatient Rehabilitation). He then moved to Clayton County Georgia and started a private practice with Robert Donatelli, and Steve Kraus in 1977. He sold his practice to Physiotherapy Associates in 1993, and then worked for Physio Associates as a regional director. He taught in the Physical Therapy Program at Georgia State University in the 1980s, Emory University, the North Ga college in the early 90s. He was Associate Professor and Vice Chairman of the Department of Physical Therapy and Biokinesiology at USC 1996-98 and Associate Professor of Physical Therapy at North Georgia College and State University from 1998 until he passed away August 2005.

The following information was provided by several people including family and colleagues:

Scot would probably identify Helen Hislop as his greatest mentor, but he was also mentored by the cardiologists he worked with including David Skloven. However, Scot was a mentor to MANY, including many of the early Cardiopulmonary Clinical Specialists. He was the author (with Jan Techlin) of one of the first entry level textbooks in Cardiopulmonary Physical Therapy. Scot was known for his size as he towered over many including Florence Kendall at one of the unforgettable Friday night CSM Cardio dances! His greatest achievement was being one of the first three APTA board certified specialists and also the first President of the APTA Cardiopulmonary Section. He also felt being a husband to Stacey and father to Jake and Josh and grandfather were his great achievements.

Scot served the APTA as Treasurer as well as on the Board of Directors in the 1980s-90s and was very involved with the PT Foundation that honors him with a fund initiated by the Cardiopulmonary Section to support post doctoral research.

Bob Huhn in 1978      Bob Huhn NOW



**Robert Huhn** was the very first Vice President of the Cardiopulmonary Section, and the Second president of the Section. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Therapy from Mankato, MN State College and Certificate in PT from Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN and a Master of Arts from San Diego State University. He is the Founder and

Director of The Human Performance Center in Santa Barbara, California, A comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation facility dedicated to assisting individuals regain and maintain active lifestyles.

1. When did you first get involved in the Cardiopulmonary Section/Academy of CV&P?

I attended the APTA national meeting in Anaheim, CA in I believe 1975 or whenever the section was formed. I had not been at a national meeting before. I found there was a meeting for those interested in Cardiopulmonary to attend a meeting about the formation of a section. I attended the meeting which May Watrous and another lady led. I believe all the ground work had been laid ahead of time by those two ladies and it was being voted on by the House of Delegates the next day or two. I then lobbied with others promoting the formation of the section. After it was approved by the HOD May had another meeting about selecting officers. I had just finished my Masters Degree from San Diego State and then I did an unpaid internship at Rancho Los Amigos. There I met Scott Irwin, Randy Ice, and Ray Blessey. Scott had been an inspiration to me and I nominated Scott for president. (He was not at the convention.) The formative group voted for Scott and I became the VP

2. Who were some of your mentors?

Scott, Randy Ice and Ray Blessey. Previous to meeting them I had attended San Diego State and obtained my Masters in Exercise Physiology and a cardiologist, John Boyer MD, taught two courses: EKG basics and cardiopulmonary pathology. I became director of cardiac rehab at Cottage Hospital. There David Gillon MD Cardiologist was the medical director of the program and I followed him on rounds and went over EKG findings in the doctors' reading room.

3. How have you practiced cardiopulmonary (what types of settings) and what are your proudest achievements?

I worked at Cottage Hospital for 4 years and then set up a private practice and become a member of Specialized Coronary Outpatient Rehabilitation (SCOR) a corporation, with Scott, Randy and Ray. I was proud to be the first VP of the CP section and then succeed Scott as the next president. I was also chosen to lead cardiac rehab at Cottage Hospital. I started treating patient there and then carried on with initially cardiac and added pulmonary rehab in my outpatient setting. I am still working with those patients in my outpatient setting.

4. What is your advice to give someone to keep updated in our field, and what worked for you?

Attending and becoming involved in the Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Section (now the Academy? I was not aware of this name). I attended a meeting for Cardiologist and other physicians in Santa Barbara 3x per month for several years. I gained a great deal of knowledge there. I will say I had very little information on CP during my course of study in physical therapy during physical therapy school at Mayo Clinic in Rochester Minnesota,

5. What is the most important issue for the CVP Academy to address in the future?

Removal of the required physician being on premises for cardiac rehab. In my work in private practice, I bill cardiac and pulmonary rehab using the CPT code 97110 – I called it monitored Therapeutic exercise even though I am not performing all of the components CMS requires of cardiac and pulmonary rehab. This would be a monumental effort and I not sure it would be worth it. But it would

allow physical therapists who work outside of the hospital to provide CP services.