

The GPPA's Founding Vision

In 1984, two Toronto GPs from widely different backgrounds met and gave birth to a novel medical vision years ahead of its time. From somewhat patrician British roots, Bob James graduated from the University of Birmingham in 1954 and came to Canada in 1957. Terry Burrows, from a modest Canadian medical family, graduated from the University of Toronto in 1968. A chance meeting and the discovery of shared interests in humanistic psychology blossomed into a productive friendship.

An unlikely pair — Terry often referred familiarly to Bob as “Sir Robert” — they created a remarkable idea together. This was to promote psychotherapy in the medical profession in Canada, primarily to its GPs, through professional and public education. The overall purpose of this was to foster citizenship — constructive participation in community — from an infrastructure of personal and social mental health.

Burrows and James estimated there to be 20,000 GPs in Canada, each having a conservative average of 1000 adult patients to whom psychotherapy would be relevant. They visualized a national medical organization that could deliver a vigorous and positive influence for mental and social health to the adult population of Canada on a regular basis, through the offices of their GPs. The key was to start fostering the development of practice-practical psychotherapy to the GPs of Canada, who, because of their unique doctor-patient relationships with members of the communities in which they were embedded, would find this a natural clinical and cultural fit.

Bob and Terry recognized this vision had spiritual dimensions with the potential to transform the medical profession — which in turn could help transform society. They wondered what constructive contributions a more mentally healthy Canada could then make to the rest of the world. Many with whom they shared their idea initially took it up with enthusiasm. Was this vision too idealistic, too impractical to be realized? That Bob and Terry were willing to be called idealistic and impractical is why there is a GPPA today at all.

But after the first 20 years, are we there yet? Well... no. But many steps have been taken along their visionary path, and the story is not over. The GPPA may no longer have its Founders active in the organization: Bob James died in 1996 and Terry Burrows is now an Honorary Member, retired from practicing psychotherapy and pursuing other endeavors. But there is a new generation at the helm and another 20 years ahead. The GPPA's founding vision is needed more today than ever. And we have the internet now... Read on.

GPPA Past Presidents and Chairs

1984 – 1991	Dr Terry Burrows, Founder and President
1991 – 1992	Dr Phil Walsh, President
1992 – 1993	Dr Mel Goodman, President
1993 – 1995	Dr Marc Gabel, Chair
1995 – 1996	Dr Michael Cord, Chair of the Board Dr Roy Salole, Chair of the Executive Committee
1996 – 1997	Dr Michael Cord, Chair
1997 – 1999	Dr Allen Kalpin, President Dr David Marsh, Chair
1999 – 2001	Dr Allen Kalpin, President
2001 – 2002	Dr Joan Barr, Chair
2002 – 2004	Dr David Murphy, President
2004 – 2005	Dr David Cree, President Dr Peggy Wilkins, Chair
2005 – 2006	Dr David Cree, President Dr Peggy Wilkins, Chair
2006 – 2007	Dr Victoria Winterton, President Dr Janice Coates, Chair
2007 – 2008	Dr Victoria Winterton, President Dr Janice Coates, Chair
2008 – 2009	Dr Victoria Winterton, President Dr Janice Coates, Chair
2009 – 2010	Dr Victoria Winterton, President Dr Julie Webb, Chair
2010 – 2011	Dr Muriel J. van Lierop, President Dr Julie Webb, Chair
2011 – 2012	Dr Muriel J. van Lierop, President Dr Howard Schneider, Chair