

About AA

Board Selects New Chairperson

A medical administrator and longtime friend of Alcoholics Anonymous, Terrance M. Bedient (nonalcoholic), of Albany, New York, has been selected as chairperson of A.A.'s General Service Board, replacing outgoing board chair the Very Rev. Ward Ewing, D.D.

First introduced to A.A. in 1975 while in charge of an E.A.P. program, Terry attended his first open A.A. meeting over 40 years ago. There, he says, he became good friends "with a couple of guys in recovery who swore by A.A.," thus beginning the long association that first brought him to A.A.'s General Service Board in 2008, where he has been serving as the board's treasurer.

Terry's career in medical administration began after his service as an army officer, when he was appointed assistant administrator and risk manager at Beekman Downtown Hospital in Manhattan. From 1984-1996, Terry headed Myers Community Hospital in the Rochester exurb of Sodus, New York. Appointed by New York Chief Judge Judith Kaye in 1999 to serve on the Commission on Alcohol and Substance Abuse in the Legal Profession, Terry served for three years as a charter board member of the Lawyers Assistance Trust, an independent statewide entity overseeing substance abuse programs for attorneys and judges in New York State.

More recently, Terry has also been vice president of the Medical Society of New York and director of the Committee for Physician Health, an organization dedicated to providing confidential assistance to physicians suffering from substance use or other psychiatric disorders.

For Terry, becoming chairperson provides a humbling opportunity, a chance to help spread the particular hope he has witnessed in the eyes of A.A. members as they recover. Asked what he thinks are some of the greatest challenges facing A.A. right now, Terry responds, "The key issue facing A.A. is membership growth and engagement. There are enormous opportunities worldwide to share the lifesaving message of A.A. as the Fellowship engages in the many aspects of service." Additionally, Terry notes, "Our recent membership surveys show that about two-thirds of new members come to A.A. through non-A.A. sources," highlighting the importance of A.A.'s ongoing relationship with the professional community, those who work with and treat alcoholics on a daily basis.

Board Welcomes New Trustees

Also joining the board this year are two new Class A (nonalcoholic) trustees who will serve the Fellowship over the next six years:

the Honorable Ivan Lemelle, a U.S. District Court Judge from New Orleans, Louisiana, and David M. Morris, a financial consultant from New York City. They will replace rotating Class A trustees Ward Ewing and the Honorable Rogelio Flores, who have served the Fellowship since 2004 and 2007, respectively.

Chosen for their professional or business backgrounds and the unique personal experience they can bring to A.A., the seven Class A trustees on the General Service Board have always provided critical service to the board as it carries out its business, communicates with the Fellowship, and carries the message of recovery to the suffering alcoholic. Importantly, Class A trustees have been able to do certain things the 14 Class B (alcoholic) trustees cannot do, such as addressing the media head-on or using their last names in connection with A.A. without violating the Traditions and principles of anonymity designed to keep A.A. members out of the public eye.

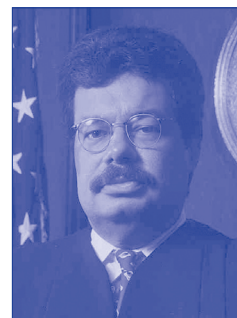
The part played by such nonalcoholic trustees is, according to A.A. cofounder Bill W., "quite beyond reckoning." Says Bill in a January 1966 article for A.A.'s monthly journal, the AA Grapevine: "In the days when A.A. was unknown, it was the nonalcoholic trustees who held up our hands before the general public.... Their very presence on our board was quite able to command full confidence and the respect of many faraway groups. Meanwhile, they assured the world around us of A.A.'s worth. These are the unusual services which indeed they still render."

For the Honorable Ivan Lemelle, his 2013 selection to the General Service Board offers an opportunity to give something back to those in need and to spread the message of recovery. "In a general way, A.A. is known as a service organization providing assistance to alcoholics and, in a broader sense, to society as a whole," he says. "From a personal perspective, however, my awareness of A.A.'s mission and, moreover, its effectiveness, was enhanced when it literally rescued a number of my friends and relatives from destroying themselves. For that and more," he notes, "I am eternally grateful."

An attorney who has served both the city of New Orleans as an assistant district attorney and the state of Louisiana as assistant attorney general, Ivan has seen alcoholism close up while working with others in the legal



Terry M. Bedient



The Hon. Ivan Lamelle



David M. Morris

system to develop alternative approaches for the treatment, education and job development of offenders with substance abuse issues.

“We learn from our professional and personal experiences ways to help others in need of help. Whether part of some organized effort like A.A., reentry court programs, or through a more individualized contact with those who seek the means to sobriety, love for all humankind strengthens our resolve to do more,” says Ivan.

In Ivan’s case, “more” meant the willingness to stand for the position of Class A trustee — “I needed to do more than just being a fan of A.A.’s legacy of service,” he says.

David M. Morris, whose business experience is in the financial realm, was also drawn to A.A. through the benefits it had for a close family member who joined A.A. and has stayed sober for over 30 years. “I’ve seen what wonderful blessings A.A. can bring to a person,” he says. “I’ve also gotten to know a number of other people in the program over the years, and it has changed my life for the better, too.”

Currently a consultant providing financial and accounting guidance to a wide variety of clients, David is a former Senior Vice President for Accounting Policies at JPMorgan Chase Bank and prior to that worked at Price Waterhouse in New York City managing accounting and auditing services in the petroleum, publishing, advertising and marine transportation fields, among others.

As he begins his service on the board, David will be stepping into the position of treasurer, taking over for Terry Bedient, who has been selected as board chairperson.

Familiar with bank regulators and fiscal constraints, David has been an accountant for many years and is well-prepared to address A.A.’s unique approach to finance, an approach that revolves around the traditional policy of self-support and the concept of corporate poverty. “I have seen a little bit of everything in my business experience, from multi-billion dollar organizations to small not-for-profits, to dealing with customers and bank regulators. All of that I think will allow me to fit nicely into A.A.’s financial picture and help guide things in the direction that A.A. wants to go.

“I’ve also been up to Stepping Stones, cofounder Bill W., and his wife Lois’s home, and have sat at Bill’s desk and gone through his archives and the museum up there, which helps to put things in perspective,” David says.

When asked what challenges he feels the future holds for A.A., David talks about the changing paradigm of publishing and the impact of today’s digital environment. “As the world in general moves toward less print material, whether it’s newspapers, magazines, or the Big Book, organizations such as A.A. are going to have to come up with new ways to survive with less print being sold. Whether that’s going to be a problem or not, only time will tell. But it’s certainly going to be on my radar.

“Luckily,” David notes, “change will come when we’re ready for it.... Bill W. set it up that way.”

Spanish Public Service Announcement

Reaching out to those who are still suffering is one of the most fundamental aspects of Alcoholics Anonymous. In 1966, the General Service Conference approved the first public service announcements (P.S.A.) for A.A., and in the 47 years since it’s likely that thousands of men and women have found A.A. from broadcast information dispensed via P.S.A.s.

In 2010, it was suggested that in order to increase the effectiveness of foreign language P.S.A.s, the P.S.A.s should be made in the native languages of those they are meant to reach, rather than the standard practice of making a P.S.A. in English and simply translating it into Spanish or French.

Work began in the spring of 2011. With the assistance of the La Viña (A.A.’s Spanish-language magazine) Editorial Board, composed of four Spanish-speaking A.A. members who are media professionals, along with the La Viña editor, and two G.S.O. publications department Spanish editors, who translate the majority of A.A. literature and Conference-approved material into Spanish, a script was developed.

Now, as “Tengo Esperanza” (“I have hope”) is beginning to air on Spanish language TV, the Fellowship is providing yet another effective tool for carrying the A.A. message. The new P.S.A. may also be viewed, along with all of G.S.O.’s videos, on www.aa.org. As Bill W., A.A.’s cofounder, noted regarding public information work, “We are trying our best to reach more of those 25 million alcoholics who today inhabit the world. We have to reach them directly or indirectly. In order to accomplish this it will be necessary that understanding of A.A. and public good will toward A.A. go on growing everywhere.”

Special Needs Pamphlet Now in Other Formats

In 2012 the Conference Committee on Treatment/Special Needs-Accessibilities suggested that the pamphlet “A.A. for the Alcoholic With Special Needs” be produced in formats for alcoholics who are deaf, blind, or have learning challenges.

An ASL (American Sign Language) translation of that pamphlet is now available on DVD. A new audio CD, in English, French and Spanish, of this pamphlet is also available for the blind and for those who are learning challenged. The ASL DVD also includes English subtitles.

The DVD and CD are complete translations of the A.A. pamphlet and feature 11 personal stories of members with 11 different special circumstances, which present particular challenges to members in receiving the A.A. message.

The ASL translated “A.A. for the Alcoholic With Special Needs,” is the third A.A. literature item translated into ASL, joining *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Members and groups can utilize ASL and CD literature in the same ways print items are used to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

How Can A.A. Help You?

Would you be interested in having an A.A. presentation at one of your professional gatherings? Or would you like information about recovery from alcoholism in A.A.? If so, please contact the C.P.C. desk at the General Service Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, or cpc@aa.org. We welcome your questions, comments and requests.

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