REFLECTIONS
OF OUR PAST
To our SOFT family and friends,

It has been our privilege and honor to work on this e-publication commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Society of Forensic Toxicologists. We thank the past SOFT presidents who provided inspiring letters for young toxicologists, leaders from partnering organizations who offered kind congratulations, and the SOFT membership for its memorializing messages and pictures. We also thank the 2020 SOFT president, Sumandeep Rana and CC Watson who has been instrumental in nicely putting all these together.

While the 2020 meeting was regrettably and yet necessarily cancelled for the safety of the membership and future of the organization, we hope that this publication is a meaningful way for us to virtually celebrate our history. In addition to the e-publication, the History Committee has tirelessly worked on a variety of events, including time capsules, family trees, and a celebratory proceeding during SOFTember. We invite the SOFT membership to join us in remembering the SOFT’s history and accomplishments over the 50 years and aspiring to achieve new heights as we open a new chapter.

Sincerely yours,

Dayong Lee, History Committee Member

Bruce Goldberger, History Committee Chair

History Committee Members:
Yale Caplan
Delisa Downey
Marissa Finkelstein
Bruce Goldberger
Dayong Lee
Dani Mata
Michelle Peace
Vina Spiehler
Denice Teem
Jay Vargas
CC Watson

Partnering Organizations:
Jeri Ropero-Miller
President
American Academy of Forensic Sciences

Marc Lebeau and Dimitri Gerostamoulos
President and President-elect, respectively
The International Association of Forensic Toxicologists

Ayesha Saldanha
Publisher
Journal of Analytical Toxicology, Oxford University Press
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Dear SOFT colleagues and friends,

I am excited and humbled to be writing this message as we celebrate 50 years of SOFT's history. What started as an informal gathering of a few forensic toxicologists in Long Island, NY in 1970 has now become one of the nation’s most respected and prestigious forensic toxicology organizations with 1,512 members. Fifty years ago, a few passionate individuals thought about the value of collaboration for the scientific advancement in the field of forensic toxicology. Their efforts and vision lead to the formation of SOFT.

It is time to reflect upon our achievements as well as opportunities, and to recognize all the hard work put in by people before us who made SOFT such a remarkable organization. In the last few years, the board of directors of SOFT have made key strategic decisions to strengthen SOFT’s operations, and to address the needs of membership as the organization continues to evolve. Hiring of an Executive Director to attend to SOFT business (2016), revision of SOFT Bylaws (2018), institution of several new committees including Finance Committee (2018), Culture, Values and Diversity Committee (2019), and Professional Mentoring Program Committee (2019) are just a few of the most recent initiatives.

To commemorate SOFT’s golden jubilee the History Committee is working on creating SOFT family trees to preserve SOFT history for the future generations. They are also creating time capsules for future generations to get a glimpse into SOFT history. Valuable past and present SOFT and forensic toxicology artifacts will be preserved in these time capsules.

We had planned several special activities for the anniversary meeting that was to be held in sunny San Diego this September. The 2020 meeting committee put in several months of hard work into planning this meeting. Sadly, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, keeping in mind the health and safety of our attendees, had to make the very difficult decision of cancelling the in-person annual meeting this year. The Past Presidents and Charter Members were to be recognized with Presidential Medallions during the opening ceremony. To commemorate the special anniversary, we instituted four new annual awards: SOFT Research in Forensic Toxicology Award, SOFT Young Forensic Toxicologist Service Award, SOFT Teaching and Mentoring Award, and SOFT Service Award. These awards,
recognizing exceptional contributions from SOFT members in the respective categories, were to be presented during the Presidential Gala dinner. These recognitions will now be held during the 2021 annual meeting, for which we will hopefully be able to meet in person.

SOFT Board and membership have always been resilient and unabated by challenges and difficult times. Although we are living in unprecedented times, we quickly adapted to our changed environment and planned for SOFTember, a month long virtual educational program in September to include most elements of an annual SOFT meeting. Being able to host SOFTember in lieu of our in-person annual meeting this year is a big milestone for SOFT.

There has been tremendous advancement in the forensic toxicology field in last fifty years. While in 1970 the scientific discussions were focused on head-space analysis of volatiles, today we talk about on-line sample preparation, novel psychoactive substances, and newer analytical techniques such as high-resolution mass spectrometry. Fifty years from now science will have advanced exponentially and analytical instrumentation will likely be miniaturized, automation will play a much larger role in forensic toxicology laboratories and toxicologists might be operating analytical instruments remotely via their smart phones. The “woodies” might be virtual by then 😊. The one thing that I hope will remain the same is the supportive, caring and family culture of SOFT. I hope the future generations of forensic toxicologists will continue to leverage SOFT’s history to shape a bright future, and they continue to gather at annual meetings to advance their knowledge and strengthen their friendships.

Best,

Sumandeep Rana, Ph.D.
SOFT President, 2020
Dear SOFT Community,

I am honored to be addressing all of you on this momentous occasion! As not only the first Executive Director, but the first full-time employee of SOFT, it is an exciting time to be a part of this wonderful organization. The 50th Anniversary allows us to look back at the first 50 years that have served as the building blocks of SOFT, as well as to look forward to the next 50 years.

As you all know, SOFT is a one-of-a-kind organization. Often referred to as “family,” it is a rare professional association that provides this warm environment to its members. I believe that this success can be attributed to simultaneously maintaining the collegial atmosphere the organization was founded on, while constantly adapting to the needs of members in an ever-changing world. When SOFT has the opportunity to meet in person, the warmth is contagious with big smiles and big hugs being the greetings of choice. Participants at the Annual Meeting can be found in the lobby bar until closing, and then back at the meeting early in the morning – a true testament to how much this group loves spending time together. As SOFT continues to grow, the more we need to adapt our offerings to meet these new needs. In particular, the new Professional Mentoring Program fosters personal and professional networks within SOFT and the field of forensic toxicology. With more than 70 participants in our inaugural year, this program is indicative of SOFT members’ desire to build connections.

As staff, CC and I have spent the past four years working to maintain SOFT’s congenial and volunteer culture, while simultaneously working to improve processes, enhance services, and provide stability. This includes integrating technology in SOFT’s processes to simplify and standardize the work that we do. In addition, we help provide continuity from year to year for the Board of Directors and SOFT committees, including the meeting planning committee. We are committed to being fiscally responsible and constantly adapting to reduce expenditures and generate additional revenue.

SOFT’s commitment to continuing education extends to the staff, and CC and I have had the opportunity to continue our own training in association management and meeting planning in order to bring the best practices from both of those industries to enhance SOFT.

I feel privileged to be part of SOFT at this important mark in the organization’s history, and I look forward to continuing to work with leadership and the membership to reinforce SOFT’s foundation and strengthen our future.

Onward and upward!

Beth Olson
Executive Director
Society of Forensic Toxicologists
CONGRATULATORY LETTERS

Society of Forensic Toxicologists Inc.

®
Congratulations to the Society of Forensic Toxicologists, Inc. for reaching its golden anniversary!

SOFT is recognized around the world as one of the premier professional organizations for forensic toxicologists. The society has excelled in its educational opportunities for its members, as well as its forward-thinking advancements for the field.

The International Association of Forensic Toxicologists values our long-standing partnerships with SOFT. Historically, we have held five joint meetings of the two organizations, but more importantly we have shared ideas and collaborated on ways to improve both organizations.

We raise a glass to SOFT! Here is to another 50 years of advancing the field of forensic toxicology!

Sincerely,

Marc A. LeBeau, PhD, F-ABFT
President

Dimitri Gerostamoulos, PhD
President-Elect
SOFT 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Introduction
The Journal of Analytical Toxicology is an international toxicology journal and is the official journal of SOFT through an affiliation partnership with Oxford University Press. Ayesha Saldanha is an Associate Publisher at the press, and is responsible for the day-to-day operations and longer-term strategy for the journal.

Letter
February 26, 2020

Society of Forensic Toxicologists
1955 W. Baseline Rd. Ste 113-442
Mesa, AZ 85202

Dear SOFT members and leadership,

Oxford University Press is thrilled to be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT) in 2020. As the publisher of Journal of Analytical Toxicology (JAT), we have collaborated with the society over the last seven years with great success, and together we look forward to a promising future.

JAT is a well-regarded destination for publications by SOFT members and we are proud to give SOFT members access to the research published by their peers and colleagues. JAT’s 2019 Impact Factor is 3.150, an all-time high for the journal, ranking it 35/93 in the Toxicology Journals Citation Report category, and 22 of 84 journals in the Chemistry, Analytical category.

At OUP we’re excited about the road ahead for JAT and SOFT. The reputation of the journal has grown, and we are seeing submissions from around the world increase month on month. The journal benefits from being hosted on the Oxford Academic platform, whose online features like split view and social sharing enhance the user experience. Content is optimized for discovery by the most well-used researchers’ search engines—the journal sees over 128K article views per month, with many users directed from Google, NIH, and SOFT’s own website. The journal’s newly refreshed presence on social media ensures continual engagement from academic and lay audiences, ensuring the latest toxicological research is having both an academic and societal impact.

With a strong foundation and clear strategy for the future, we are confident we will be seeing an upward trajectory for JAT’s contributions to the field in this decade and beyond, and we are proud to be on that road together with SOFT.

Best regards,

Ayesha Saldanha (she/her)
Associate Publisher, Journals
Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 726 6276
ayesha.saldanha@oup.com
February 21, 2020

Society of Forensic Toxicologists, Inc.

On behalf of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), we extend our good wishes as you celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT). Congratulations on reaching this important milestone!

The AAFS is proud of the long-standing relationship with SOFT and the collaboration between organizations in promoting and developing forensic toxicology.

The “Purposes and Goals of SOFT” are accomplished and well-represented in its membership, workshops, newsletters, SOFT-sponsored technical publications, SOFT-sponsored programs, Drugs and Driving Committee, OSAC representation, as well as its membership in the Forensic Toxicology Council and the Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations.

SOFT is to be commended for its lasting commitment to excellence in promoting the highest standards of forensic toxicology and in constantly improving the forensic toxicologists' skills and knowledge.

Best wishes for a memorable 50th Anniversary celebration!

Jeri R. Miller
Jeri D. Ropero-Miller, PhD, F-ABFT
AAFS President, 2020-21
MESSAGES TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

FROM PAST PRESIDENTS
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

I started my toxicology career in Dr. Irving Sunshine’s lab in 1964 as an Assistant Chemist, making $4,800 a year. We packed our own GC columns, made our TLC plates and survived without air conditioning. What kept me in the field was the diversity of the analyses I performed, the broad scientific knowledge I was accumulating and the excellence of the scientific staff at the office that inspired me. My two cents from an old Sunshine Boy - Work hard, don’t just get by, get involved and think about how you can do it better.

-Nicholas

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE

Assistant Chemist, Cuyahoga Co. Coroner’s Office, Cleveland, OH 1964-69
Toxicologist, Project CRASH, State of Vermont, Burlington, VT, 1973
Toxicologist, Office of the CME, State of Vermont, Burlington, VT, 1973-74

INvolvement IN SOFT

Secretary, 1986-87
Vice-President, 1988
President, 1989
Various Committees, 1981-95
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

During my career I have seen tremendous change and advancement in the profession of forensic toxicology. The analytical advances have been just short of miraculous. Our understanding and use of pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, pharmacogenomics, and drug interactions has paralleled that of our analytical advancements. Attempting to keep up in these advancements has been a challenge, but it has been one of the things that made this profession fun. I encourage you to never stop learning and never be afraid to challenge conventional wisdom. I also urge you to participate in SOFT and develop professional relationships that can assist you in your career and, more importantly, develop friendships that can last a lifetime.

-William

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE

State of Tennessee: Forensic Toxicologist, Regional Lab Director, and as Chief Toxicologist
  Assistant Professor, University of Tennessee Center for the Health Sciences
Deputy Chief Toxicologist, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, State of Oklahoma
Chief Toxicologist, Sierra Nevada Labs, Reno, NV
Chief Toxicologist, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, State of North Carolina
Chief Toxicologist, The Washoe County Sheriff’s Office Forensic Science Division, Reno NV
Forensic Toxicologist, NMS Labs

INvolvement in SOFT

A member since 1983; various committees such as Budget Finance and Audit, Nominating, and Policy and Procedures; a member of the Board of Directors on two separate occasions. President in 1991. Presented papers at the annual meetings and served on the faculty for various workshops.
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

- Attempt every opportunity presented to you, even when there is a probability of failure. The experience will be valuable
- Do not make the same mistake twice
- Drive/push yourself hard professionally, but that includes giving attention to loved ones and family. Your work is only part of you and not all of you
- When presented with an analytical dilemma, take a break and do something physically intense, and that may help give a new perspective to the problem (and it may help with personal problems as well!)
- Doing the “right thing” professionally may mean that you go against the crowd...but it is better to be correct than to agree
- Treat colleagues and employees fairly and honestly. And you can still attempt to be kind even to those who may not deserve your respect
- Be a problem solver and find solutions
- Learn to find the strengths in others (colleagues and employees) and use those strengths to make your workplace better
- Teach your colleague/employee your skills and accept that they may eventually be better than you in certain areas
- Sometimes doing the “right thing” is extremely difficult. But do that regardless
- Keep learning. I began toxicology with separatory funnels, thin layer chromatography and UV then progressed to GC, GC/MS, LC and LC/MS

-Joe

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE
Saady Consulting Incorporated- Director; IntegraLabs- Laboratory Director; Virginia Commonwealth Univ, School of Medicine- Clinical Associate Professor; Commonwealth of Virginia- Chief Toxicologist; Office of The Army Surgeon General- Consultant; VCU School of Medicine- Director of Toxicology Specialty Testing, Assistant Professor; Department of Biomedical Engineering, Industrial Hygiene Curriculum; Scientific Testing Laboratories- Responsible Person; US Army Environmental Hygiene Agency-Toxicologist Medical College of Virginia- Toxicologist; National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council- Committee on Toxicology

INVolVEMENT IN SOFT
Board of Directors 1992, 2019-2020; Educational Research Award Committee, 1992-1994; ERA, Committee Chair 1994; Treasurer 1993 to 1996; Vice President 1997; President 1998; Past President 1999; Chair, Visioning Work-group 1999-2000; Ethics Committee 1999; Drug-Facilitated Crime Committee, 2000 – present; Audit Committee, 2010-2016; Finance Committee, 2017 to present; Counselor, Board of Directors 2019-2020
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

The best thing about SOFT is its people. Everyone is willing to share their knowledge. SOFT welcomes all toxicologists. Our first goal is to provide the best opportunities to learn and to share the new science at the most reasonable cost possible. Our second goal is to provide the most food and drink, because so many toxicologists must pay their own way to attend. Most years we do this with excellent workshops, breakfasts, drink tickets and fun. Our vendors are considered scientific colleagues; hence, they love to attend, provide another important source of knowledge and expertise, and host great social events.

My first message to Young Forensic Toxicologists is to realize when you are starting out that you need to take full advantage of the opportunities that SOFT provides. Go meet the person who wrote a great paper that you use all the time, ask questions of the experienced analysts about technical issues, and find out how the best testify and keep their cool under a defense attorney’s attack. Find ways to publish your work so you also contribute to our field. Volunteer to help— it is fun and a great way to meet people. Most importantly— finish your education. Become a leader and decision maker. I used to think that you had to be Einstein to get a PhD, but you learn that a PhD is really about hard work, not giving up, and learning to stick with the task when it gets tough.

I am a military brat and a military wife. I have lived in 26 US states and was born in Guam. Pretty tough to complete your education with all those moves. I went to a great college—Mount Holyoke, one of the seven sister’s schools. I was taught to think and resolve problems, not to memorize. This education helped me in so many different ways. I worked for 10 years after graduation before I had the chance to go back for a 2-year master’s degree in Clinical Chemistry with two young children. Then I worked another 10 years to get my doctoral degree in Toxicology. I was honored to call Irving Sunshine my friend and he constantly encouraged me to complete my education and to give back to the field. He told me to choose the easiest project and just get the piece of paper so that I could be a decision maker. I was 40 when I started my doctorate and thrilled that I could work with Ed Cone at the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

I chose to administer cannabis to human volunteers and characterize the absorption phase of cannabis smoking. It was crazy difficult but so much fun. I definitely succumbed to the research bug, but the most rewarding aspect for me was the opportunity to mentor doctoral students, post doctoral fellows and visiting scientists. I had the honor of spending 23 years at NIDA doing human research. I was 42 when I wrote my first paper and I have 505 now. Not bad for a late starter.

NIDA was the first job that I got to choose. Otherwise, I was looking for work in Pensacola, FL, Norfolk, VA, Brunswick, ME, Corpus Christi, TX and so many more. Make the most of every position, there is so much to learn and it will all come together later in your career to make you a
better toxicologist and person. So it is never too late to finish your education and start writing. Mentoring is so rewarding- teaching your colleagues to love toxicology is the most fulfilling and satisfying experience ever. SOFT and toxicology have enriched my life, but most importantly given me friends for life.

-Marilyn

**TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE**

50 years of toxicology, Pharmacology & Toxicology- controlled drug administration, studies to human drug users, Clinical Toxicology, Driving Under the Influence of Drugs, Postmortem Toxicology, Analytical Toxicology, Alternative Matrices Drug Testing, Drug Dependence & Addiction, Therapeutic Drug Monitoring, Clinical Chemistry

**INVolVEMENT IN SOFT**

40 year member
Past-President
Past-Secretary
Board of Directors
Frequent speaker & workshop presenter
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

I attended Pittsburg State University in Kansas, earning a B.S. in biological sciences with a minor in physical chemistry in 1964 and later a Master’s in Public Administration. My original dream job was to become a wildlife biologist for the State of Kansas. Never got that job. After college I spent six months on active duty at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO and then 5.5 years on weekend reserve duty.

I started at the State Health Department on April 15, 1965 as a Junior Microbiologist doing syphilis serology analysis. In 1969 I was put in charge of the States CLIA Program inspecting clinical labs in the state as required under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act. Also, during that time, I spent some time in our Milk Lab and our Microbiology Lab. I was always willing to branch out and learn as much as I could.

In late 1969 the lab director, Dr. David McGuire asked if I who would like to go to the State Patrol Training Academy to see the new breath alcohol testing unit they had purchased and sit in on their training being conducted by the manufacturer. That first simple two-day training session marked the beginning of my lengthy career in Forensic Science.

At that time the state did not have a Toxicology Program nor any guidance as to how blood or breath tests were to be conducted. Dr. McGuire put me in charge of researching the unit the State Patrol purchased and develop a protocol they should follow when testing subjects. From 1970-71, I along with Dr. McGuire went around the state to the various State Patrol offices where the units were located to train officers in how run the testing protocol. I continued to conduct training through much of my career.

From the start of my Forensic career I took the approach that the client had the right to an accurate test. Law enforcements job was to apprehend and arrest the subjects and my/our job was to make sure the tests were scientifically accurate and defensible in court.

There was no Toxicology Program in 1971 so we applied for and received a Highway Safety grant for a full-time position plus travel and expense money to do the work. At that time, I was the Program.

My first court appearance was in 1971 in Glenwood Springs Colorado. After several hundreds of times testifying it’s still scary. For the better part of almost 30 years I was the States witness in mostly DUI alcohol cases until I retired. Though along the way I had many qualified assistants to assist.

Over the years, I worked closely with the Colorado Department of Revenue, Motor Vehicle Hearing Section, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, the District Attorney’s Association and all law
enforcement agencies. “I got to know every law enforcement officer in the state,” which in time became handy.

Colorado has some unique features. Flat lands and mountains. I had to beat down the controversy about the accuracy of the tests at different altitudes. “We did research and proved it was the same.”

I expect one of my major career accomplishments was centralizing the alcohol-testing program for drunk drivers and standardizing how the breath tests were to be run. And later merging of our Drug Tox with the Alcohol Program to have a true Toxicology Section. Over my career I have been able to feed off of other leading Toxicologists regarding good analytical practices and how to staff and maintain a great program.

I retired from the State Lab in October 1998 and have since incorporated as a consulting company called Forensic Consultants specializing in alcohol and drug consultations to local, state, and federal entities.

To conclude SOFT has been a big part of my life and career. What I have learned from others by attending meetings and informal discussions at those meetings has greatly assisted me in my career. I would encourage any newbie to get in there and mix it up with some of the old timers. Learn from the past to make the future better.

-Bob

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE
50 years. Without attaching a CV started in Alcohol Toxicology in 1969/70 and continued in that venue and added Drug Toxicology in late 1980 as the State of Colorado Toxicology Section Chief

IN Volvement in SOFT
President
Vice President
Treasurer
Board Member
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

In 2001 I was working in the Counternarcotics Division of the Pentagon and was president of SOFT. I am sure other past presidents will pass on their wisdom telling younger forensic toxicologists to be sure to get a good education and learn as much as they can from any job they hold and I second this advice, but want to focus on my experience as president.

The message is “Expect the unexpected and deal with it.” The SOFT board addresses many programs but most important is planning and conducting a successful annual meeting. The annual meeting was scheduled to begin in October 2001 in New Orleans. On September 11, 2001 terrorists flew planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and into the Pentagon. Occupants of the Pentagon next to and behind our office all died. Our office was destroyed by the resulting fire. The nation was at a standstill. The next day I called my boss from home, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics André Hollis, “Sir, looks like we are going to be busy for the next months. Should I pass on my responsibilities as president of the Society of Forensic Toxicologists to someone else.” He replied, “Absolutely not! Go on with your plans. “Don’t let al-Qaeda win.”

I called Bonnie Fulmer in the SOFT office to put out a president’s message to all members, “The Meeting is still happening.” I called Pat Pizzo, the lead meeting host, and found that she and her team (David Green, Mahmoud ElSohly, Bob Turk, Barbara and Joe Manno) were already on top of the situation contacting the venue hotel to let them know the meeting is still on. Lisa O’Dell intensified her efforts to vendors with the same message and SOFT members called their local vendor representatives encouraging them not to drop out. Some registrants during the days immediately following 911 when flights were grounded withdrew their registration and canceled room reservations. Others continued their registration but canceled room reservations for another reason. 9/11 cut tourism in New Orleans to a fraction of expected so local hotels reduced room rates to half their usual cost. The registrants took advantage and switched hotels. Those who have planned a meeting or been board members know that the contract with the venue hotel has components beside providing meeting rooms. They offer complimentary extras, such as rooms for things like the president’s social function where attendees can relax in evenings and network with colleagues, however, only if room occupancy nights are high. They were not. Pat and her team must have done something strong to negotiate because we got the rooms and other benefits. The science at the meeting was excellent and abstracts are posted on the SOFT website. Bottom line: we had a successful meeting. We did not make a big profit but the terrorists did not keep us from having a good meeting. The message again: when the unexpected happens, charge ahead and accomplish your mission.

-Mick

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE
25+ years, postmortem, human performance, drug testing, research

INVolVEMENT IN SOFT
Past President
Past-Secretary
Board of Directors
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

What you do each and every day matters.

The “why” you do what you do conquers all. It gets you through the difficult supervisor or co-worker, the days/weeks/months of more to do than you can get to or the do more with less mentality of your organization, and it helps modulate the struggle to balance work and family. Your career will be a give and take. Some days it is more about the daily grind at work. Other days you get to work on a project or research that will change the discipline. Such is the life of a toxicologist!

My guidance to you is to get involved and stay involved. Tough to do when you may have to do it outside of work hours or even outside of work financial support. You will not be disappointed – the return on investment is huge! You will get friends for life, experiences that you never dreamed of and an opportunity to support the forensic toxicology community that is a foundation of our legal system and therefore your daily community life.

You have picked a fantastic career – enjoy it!

-Laurel

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE

30 years of service with the State of Colorado; the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for over twenty-one years and then finished her career at the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. Laurel’s practitioner experience was in Toxicology, including breath alcohol, Drug Chemistry and Materials Trace (glass).

INvolvement in SOFT

A member of SOFT since 1992 serving a number of roles over the years: President in 2002, two terms as Director prior to and after serving as President, meeting host or treasurer often, and committee membership ranging from Drugs and Driving to Finance and currently as the SOFT representative on OSAC FSSB.
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

My first introduction to forensic toxicology came during my junior year in college when I took an elective class called “Toxicology.” I anticipated it would be about poisons – spiders, snakes – and yes, maybe drugs. As it turned out it was a general toxicology course, but the emphasis was on forensic toxicology. It was taught by Dr. Jesse Bidanset who was a forensic toxicologist, one of the co-founders of SOFT, and assisted with hosting the first SOFT meeting in Nassau County, NY in 1970. Suddenly, I knew what I wanted to do professionally. I was majoring in Biology (Pre-Med) and decided I would look for a graduate program in Forensic Toxicology at a university that was also affiliated with a medical school. Ultimately, it was the University of Maryland at Baltimore that fit that bill. Under the mentorship of Dr. Yale Caplan I earned my Ph.D. as a Forensic Toxicologist. Early on as a graduate student, I knew it was essential to attend both SOFT and AAFS meetings to meet and learn from others in the field. This was not always easy financially, but along with fellow graduate students, we doubled-up or quadrupled-up in hotels and somehow made it work. The friends and colleagues I met thru SOFT were a driving force that kept me going through graduate school and continued to nurture me in my career later on. The faces of SOFT have changed a lot since my first meeting in 1985. From what was largely a white male dominated profession (with a few formidable female toxicologists), SOFT, and the field of forensic toxicology, has become much more of a patchwork quilt of women and men, people of color, gay and straight, young and old. I encourage you, as a young forensic toxicologist, to learn from others, attend meetings, talk to the older toxicologists, be involved, and make the most out of what I think is one of most exciting and rewarding fields to be in. I have enjoyed almost every day I have worked in this profession and wish the same for you.

-Dan

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE

NMS Labs – Forensic Toxicologist, 2011 to present; Wayne County Medical Examiner Office - Chief Toxicologist, 1994-2011; Southgate Medical Services, Inc. d/b/a CPF MetPath Formerly Southgate Medical Laboratory - Director of Toxicology, 1991-1994; National Center for Forensic Science Maryland Medical Laboratory, Inc. - Supervisor of Analysts and Certifying Scientists, 1990-1991, National Center for Forensic Science, Maryland Medical Laboratory, Inc. - Certifying Scientist, 1988-1990; Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Toxicology Laboratory - Assistant Toxicologist, 1986-1988; Maryland Medical Laboratory, Inc., Toxicology Department - Laboratory Technologist, 1983-1988
IN Volvement in SOFT
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

Seek a solid chemistry-based education, and supplement that with a strong pharmacology (and related) education - even if post graduation. Remember that the overwhelming role of a successful forensic toxicology laboratory is to practice good analytical chemistry and apply sound common sense. In my 37 plus years practicing postmortem toxicology, I have continued to learn from the day I started in 1981 until after the day I (theoretically!) retired. If you don’t continue to question the status quo throughout your career, you’re not a very good scientist.

-Graham

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE

Post Doctoral Fellowship and sports drug testing 1976 - 78
Clinical Toxicologist University of Alberta Hospital 1978 - 81
Chief Toxicologist Province of Alberta OCME 1981 - 2018
Consultant Forensic Toxicologist 1982 - present

IN Volvement in SOFT

Member, SOFT / AAFS Forensic Laboratory Guidelines Committee (1988 - 2010)
Director on SOFT Board (1999 - 2002)
Secretary of SOFT and Chair of Membership Committee (2003)
Vice-President of SOFT (2004)
President of SOFT (2005)
Past President of SOFT (2006)
Member, Bylaws Committee (2018)
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

Dear Young Toxicologists (I used to be one …),

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on a 30-year career in forensic toxicology. My initial interest was sparked by a visit to a forensic laboratory in England when I was working in a different industry. A Masters’ degree, PhD and DSc in forensic toxicology followed and my career has been fun, satisfying, and gratifying – I wish the same for you. As long as you keep an open mind, a positive attitude and surround yourself with successful people, you cannot fail.

Many routes of science are housed in forensic toxicology – mine has not been the classic post-mortem work, but more research into drug metabolism. I encourage you to find an area of the science about which you are enthusiastic and interested; don’t be constrained by traditional case-work but branch out into different projects where possible. I have focused on characterizing the disposition of drugs and small molecules in many biological matrices (e.g. meconium, oral fluid, hair) essentially promoting and navigating the use of these specimen types in the testing of newborns, children-at-risk, drivers, workers, in pain management and monitoring programs. The research provided direct data for the rationale associated with design and development of new immunoassays and confirmatory techniques.

Analytical work in our laboratory has allowed the documentation of the correlation between oral fluid and blood concentrations in the measurement of certain illicit and prescription drugs; other aspects included developing technical awareness of roadside testing products which incorporate oral fluid analysis.

The monitoring and interpretation of drug concentrations using oral fluid for therapeutic purposes (in place of invasive blood collections) is an on-going growing area of research but the real breakthroughs will come with the interpretation of saliva drug concentrations for use in therapeutic monitoring and personalized medicine.

When I see numbers and results generated by our analytical team being used to form governmental and state policies it is gratifying because I know that decisions are being based on sound scientific analysis. When lives are positively impacted by drug analysis and social changes are implemented based on science, that is a satisfying outcome.

Scientific success over the years has been in conjunction with numerous colleagues who are still members of SOFT and TIAFT. The network these societies provide is extensive and the quality of forensic knowledge within its ranks is prestigious. I joined SOFT in 1995 and became a Board member in 2003. As a Past-President (2008) I encourage you strongly to determine whether you
find toxicology interesting, challenging and rewarding; if not then find a career that is. I have been lucky spending all these years involved with great projects, great people and a great professional society – I wish the same and more for you as you navigate forensic toxicology in all its forms.

-Christine

**TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE**

Technical Services Manager, United Chemical Technologies 1992 - 1994  
Vice-President, Laboratory Operations and Laboratory Director, US Drug Testing 1994 - 2004  
Chief Toxicologist, Scientific Affairs Immunoanalysis/Abbott 2004 - present

**IN VolVEMENT IN SOFT**

Member: 1995  
Board Member: 2003-2005  
Vice-President: 2007  
President: 2008
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

The Forensic Toxicology paradigm is evolving, and this is not a new insight, as change chronically occurs in life and in our field. Importantly, as the cliché goes, we stand on the shoulders of our predecessors and benefit from their efforts and accomplishments. So any change in the paradigm begins when we take our place in this unbroken chain of progress, however, the extent and breadth of the effort required to perform a proper and comprehensive toxicological investigation in today’s world has increased dramatically in last ten years.

One needs only to contemplate the direction of analysis, and analyses that have been pushed forward in our field, over the last ten years, due to the proliferation of drug design innovation, in drug use and abuse in both therapeutic and recreational applications. Along with this, requirements for a whole new background of knowledge, expertise and experience as innovations, in both drug development and analysis, will continue to drive this increasingly challenging paradigm.

These factors will also have impact on how we attack these challenges in our field. The resources to investigate and address cause and manner of death issues (COD, MOD) issues in unexplained deaths requires a more sophisticated, subtle, and costly approach in arriving at the right answers. This is because the costs for the processes involved have risen exponentially, due to requirements for method validation, new instrumentation, scientific foundation studies, and studies that improve interpretive understanding.

Folks coming into our field in today’s world, especially into the public sector, face increasingly limited budgets. This is especially the case, in the world of the city, county and state government laboratories that have historically, been in the front line in the determination of COD and MOD. The costs for, education, training, certification, accreditation and equipment have escalated to a point where many laboratory entities can no longer exist in traditional contexts. Current trends in the shifting paradigm are towards doing less on site, out-sourcing to commercial services, and/or new hybrids of on and off site collaborations.

These conditions all lead towards a challenging new world for incoming Forensic Toxicologists. This changing role also means building collaborative relationships in the age of electronic record keeping, with Medicolegal Death investigators, Forensic pathology services, and other forensic, medical, law enforcement and healthcare professionals to bring a complete picture together in determining an accurate Death Certification. This applies not only to cases which occur in large urban areas, but also those in rural areas of the county where comprehensive services have not historically been readily available.

These are large challenges that must be addressed through developing innovative paths that
bring all of these puzzle parts together in a coherent fashion. As with all large adventures, it can seem both daunting, and overwhelming, but that’s also what makes it exciting, and relevant to be a part of... as each case is unique, and therefore the answers provided matter, one case, one family at a time.

-Brad

**TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE**
Currently a Postmortem Forensic Toxicology consultant. Wayne County Medical Examiner’s Office in Detroit, Michigan – Laboratory Director, 1990-2011. Cuyahoga County Coroner’s Office in Cleveland, Ohio – training under Dr. Irving Sunshine, 1980 to 1990.

**INVolVEMENT IN SOFT**
Served on the SOFT Board of Directors from 2004 to 2011, serving as SOFT Treasurer over the years of 2007-2008, Vice President of the organization in 2009 and President of the organization in 2010. Served as SOFT Annual Meeting Host, and/or Annual Meeting Treasurer in 2002, 2012 and 2015.
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

Be Brave.

Forensic science demands courage. Courage to do your best, to admit a mistake, to lead. Courage and comfort do not go hand-in-hand. JR Tolkien said, “Courage is found in unlikely places”. My first major act of courage was to leave my family to pursue my PhD in a country I had never visited 5,000 miles from home! After working for the Metropolitan Police Forensic Science Laboratory in London in 1990 I applied to the PhD program in Chemistry at UBC in Vancouver, Canada. I began my PhD in a research group known for biophysical sciences and my advisor was active in the space program, not toxicology. This adventure was not going to be easy! Fast forward to the conclusion of my PhD and my first SOFT meeting (1996) in Denver, CO. Not only did I have to ask Dr. Bruce Goldberger to be my external examiner for my dissertation, but I was surrounded by other legendary names; people who had existed only on paper until that point. As a graduate student it was so intimidating to introduce myself to any of these people, and since my advisor was not in the field, it was up to me! I forced myself to walk up to iconic NIDA researchers, imposing Scotsmen, my external examiner, and countless others. I was so intimidated by the stature and accomplishments of these “giants” in our field - I felt quite overwhelmed. By the end of the meeting I had been invited to the SOFT Presidential suite for an “evening workshop”. There I truly discovered how the organization was more like a close-knit family. It was when someone who volunteered to guard the unlockable bathroom door actually stepped on my side of the bathroom, so that they could talk toxicology (and discuss the best way to isolate LSD from biological fluids) that I discovered quite how zealous this group were about their work! Over the years I have experienced the extraordinary passion, unparalleled work ethic, vigor, and human compassion of individuals within this organization. My first SOFT meeting was a defining moment, and it is still an extraordinary privilege to call so many of the people I have met in due course some of my very closest friends.

In 2010 I became President of SOFT, a few weeks after the birth of my third child. During this time, I realized that the balance between family and work responsibilities was going to be very challenging. There is no equation, mathematical proof, or equilibrium association constant that dictates this one! For me, it remains the greatest challenge: to do justice to the eccentric beauty of faith and family, while making a difference professionally.

My father died very unexpectedly in graduate school, delaying my PhD graduation due to my return to England. However, following the SOFT 1997 meeting in Utah I was afforded the opportunity to work with incredibly experienced bench toxicologists at the California Department of Justice. Several years later it was quite terrifying to leave DOJ to run a state laboratory of my own and take on those responsibilities at age 30, but I did. My managerial style has always been unconventional and quirky. When people at the state lab were not reading the scientific litera-
Sarah received her initial training in forensic toxicology at the Metropolitan Police Forensic Science Laboratory in London, England. She worked for the California Department of Justice (Bureau of Forensic Services), served as the Bureau Chief for the New Mexico Department of Health (Scientific Laboratory Division), and ran an independent accredited laboratory in Texas. As a Professor and Chair of the Department of Forensic Science at Sam Houston State University, she engaged in academic research and still engage in civil and criminal casework.

INvolvement in SOFT

My first SOFT meeting was 1996 in Denver, CO. I was fortunate to serve as a JAT Special Issue Editor, served on numerous committees, chaired the Ethics Committee and the SOFT/AAFS Drugs and Driving Committee. I was appointed to the SOFT Board of Directors in 2006, shortly after completing my term as President of the California Association of Toxicologists. However, my most valuable SOFT experience has been the lifelong friends that I have made within the organization over the past twenty-four years.

Making mistakes is inevitable. A Zen proverb tells us that “The obstacle is the path” and Robert Frost said “The best way out is through”. Realizing that this message is intended for young toxicologists, you might prefer Yoda, who said “The greatest teacher, failure is”. All are equally true. Whichever resonates, make it your passion!

As the earth turns, I celebrate my 50th year during the 50th year of SOFT. I find no coincidence in this. SOFT is my home, my place of comfort, and where I met some of my very best friends. My hope for all young forensic toxicologists is that you find good mentors for professional, personal and spiritual growth as you make your journey.

-Sarah
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

The television show Quincy sparked my interest in forensic science. Each episode, Quincy (a Medical Examiner in Los Angeles County) solved suspicious deaths using medicine and science. But his assistant, Sam (the stereotypical lab nerd), did the things I was most interested in. I related to Sam, as I had a small chemistry lab in my basement at the age of 10.

When my high school guidance counselor asked the sophomores to figure out what we wanted to do as adults, I proudly declared that I wanted to be a forensic scientist at the FBI Laboratory. I'll never forget his smirk. Who could blame him? I was in a rural Missouri town with a population of just over 2000 people! But I wouldn't let his doubt deter me!

While pursuing my master's degree at the University of New Haven – one of the few forensic science programs in the 1980s – I was lucky to have Dr. Robert Gaensslen and Dr. Henry Lee as mentors. By that time, I knew forensic toxicology was for me.

One day, Dr. Gaensslen asked where I wanted to work after completing my masters. I told him my goal to work for the FBI Laboratory, but he said: “No you don’t!” My jaw hit the desk as he explained that the FBI only hired Special Agents as forensic examiners. If I wanted to work for the FBI Laboratory, this “lab nerd” would have to become a Special Agent! Right! So, I initiated “Plan B” and decided to pursue my doctorate. Dr. Gaensslen helped me get me into the program in St. Louis and saw that I had a part-time job at the ME’s toxicology laboratory. It was a smart move, as I had day-to-day exposure to cases and new technologies of the time – like GC/MS!

A few years later, Louis Freeh was appointed as the new FBI Director. Having been a U.S. District judge, Freeh witnessed the importance of professional scientists to forensics. He reassigned many of the Special Agents to field offices and hired scientists, like me, to take their places in the laboratory. My dream had come true!

Shortly after I joined the FBI, I attended my first SOFT meeting in 1995, the 25th anniversary of SOFT. I have vivid memories from that meeting. I met many people who I'd only known by name. Everyone seemed approachable. I left with two things: a pocket full of business cards from new friends and the knowledge that I wanted to attend every future SOFT meeting that I could.

You are the future of toxicology. Many of you strive to become leaders. Good leaders are dependable and valuable. They take advantage of opportunities – whether it be to participate on committees, teach others, assist in the development of standard practices, or serve the field in other ways. My last advice: as we age, we begin resisting change. It is imperative that leaders avoid this and embrace changes that may improve our current practices.

Best wishes!
-Marc
TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE
Intern at National Medical Services (Willow Grove, PA)
Forensic Toxicology Supervisor at Saint Louis County Medical Examiner’s Office (St. Louis, MO)
Forensic Examiner at the FBI Laboratory (Washington, DC and Quantico, VA)
Unit Chief / Supervisory Chemist at the FBI Laboratory (Washington, DC and Quantico, VA)
Senior Forensic Scientist (Chemistry and Toxicology) at the FBI Laboratory (Quantico, VA)

IN Volvement in SOFT
President (2012)
Past-President (2013)
Vice-President (2011)
Treasurer (2009-2010)
Director (2007-2008)
Chair of Drug-Facilitated Crimes Committee (1999-2010); Member (2011-Present)
Host of 2004 FBI Laboratory Symposium and Joint Meeting of SOFT & TIAFT
Meeting Treasurer in 2014 (Grand Rapids) and 2017 (Boca Raton)
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

To the SOFT Membership,

Congrats to all of you for being able to celebrate such a wonder milestone, SOFT’s 50th Anniversary! The SOFT ‘family’ has been such a blessing to me, both professionally and personally! Although I started in the field of Forensic Toxicology in 1990 in Los Angeles, CA, I did not experience my first SOFT meeting until 1996 in Denver, CO. Think about that… as a young Forensic Toxicologist entering the field, not knowing exactly what lies ahead of me and not knowing that there exists a professional organization that can provide continuing education, networking, and the sense of being in a Toxicology family with similar goals. SOFT was able to provide me the opportunity to network outside my immediate laboratory and gain the wonderful friendships I maintain today along with the close sense of community! It’s so hard to imagine that I didn’t know about SOFT for the first six years of my career-I could have certainly used the newly formed SOFT Mentor program back then! I also have say that life is full of circles and loves to repeat itself. Born and raised in California, then moved to Colorado as a young teenager, then off to the east coast for my Masters education, then back to SoCal for 25 years as a Postmortem Forensic Toxicologist and now back in Denver, CO as Ante mortem Toxicologist for the past 5 years. I have been very fortunate to have experienced both sides of Forensic Toxicology in my career and have bared witness to watching SOFT as an organization grow and grow with very dedicated and hardworking scientists. Looking back at my 30-year career, I would have never thought I would have been given the opportunity to serve as the 43rd SOFT President in 2013. What a great experience it was and continues to be. SOFT has much to offer its membership, both young and old, and I truly appreciate what it has brought to me. Thank you SOFT and a toast to the next 50 years with the Tox Fam!

-Dan

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE

Los Angeles County Medical Examiner-Coroner 24 years
Ventura County Sheriff’s Crime Laboratory 1 year
Colorado Bureau of Investigation 5 years

ININVOLVEMENT IN SOFT

Lots
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

It is easy to get fixated on parts of this work that everyone calls “science” and I think a lot of words of wisdom we old farts think of has to do with what we think of as science. Honestly, that stuff is ten percent of the challenge. If this work feels hard, it is because it is hard. Forensic science as a career, is hard. Resources will always be tight. Case loads will always be overwhelming. Lawyers will always be mean. The stakes will always be high. Many think what they do is hard. What forensic science is, is hard.

It has taken me a life time to learn that the relationship between “hard” and “matters” is so tight that they are almost synonymous. There is a very good chance that if what you are doing is easy, then what you are doing doesn’t matter. If you wish to do something with your time and energy that matters, what you will do will be hard. If you are doing something that matters it will feel overwhelming and relentless and like you are resisted at every turn.

But hard is a privilege. Most things you could choose to do don’t matter like work in forensics and forensic toxicology do. You will fundamentally alter the lives of thousands if not 10’s of thousands of people’s lives over your career. Your work will mean the difference of justice for victims and their families and accountability for offenders. Your work will stand in the gap between the rule of law and lawlessness.

Thank you for choosing to do something that matters. Thank you for persevering in the face of hard.

-Peter

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE

US Navy, biochemist Navy Drug Screening Program
Aegis Sciences, Assistant lab director and Responsible Person
RTI International Center for Forensic Sciences
Houston Forensic Science Center, President/CEO

INVolVEMENT IN SOFT

20+ years. If there is a position in SOFT, I think I may have done it at some point. Honestly, I have lost track.
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

To SOFT’s next 50 years of Young Toxicologists:

I can remember my first SOFT meeting (Albuquerque, 1998) like it was yesterday. There was science for days and social activities that provided many opportunities for keen discourse between attendees. I’m fortunate that I haven’t missed a SOFT meeting since. And while finding funding to attend the conference can be difficult, I’ve always learned something fresh and exciting and new toxicology friends were made each year. While the financial investment may seem large at this point of your career, the professional return on that investment is unmatched.

As a not-for-profit professional organization run on volunteer power, there are so many opportunities to contribute that is can seem overwhelming to know where to start. That is why I am so glad that SOFT has begun a mentoring program in this 50th year of being. This program is a great opportunity for all new toxicologists to get support for the activities in SOFT that interest them. Someone once said that you should always say yes to service however small, as it will return your effort a thousand fold. In most situations I have found this to be true. By saying yes to volunteer activities in SOFT, AAFS, ABFT and other organizations with acronyms for names, I have always learned new skills and made new friends, mentors, collaborative partners, and received all the benefits networking brings.

I am fiercely appreciative of the relationships that I have formed in this esoteric field called forensic toxicology and SOFT has played a critical role germinating these friendships. I strongly encourage all of you to take advantage of these opportunities.

-Ruth

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE

Currently the Director of the Laboratory Quality Assurance Program, RTI International with more than 25 years’ experience in postmortem forensic toxicology, anti-doping, and workplace drug testing; prior to joining RTI International, served as the Chief Toxicologist for the North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (NC-OCME) in Raleigh, North Carolina starting in 1999.

INVolVEMENT IN SOFT

A member of SOFT since 1996; chaired and co-chaired workshops, moderated, reviewed abstracts and presented various topics in the scientific sessions; co-hosted two annual meetings (2007 and 2017) and served on many committees including Budget and Finance; Membership; and Policies and Procedures and has served as the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Director of SOFT.
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

When I joined the Society of Forensic Toxicologists in 1983, decades ago, there were several hundred members. The annual meetings were intimate, Society business was conducted in a crowded, smoky hospitality suite where beers were chilled in the bathtub, and the focus of the scientific sessions was on carbon monoxide, cyanide, and drugs like amitriptyline, heroin, phencyclidine, propoxyphene, and thioridazine. I have fond memories of these meetings and I am grateful for the opportunity to meet and work with many of SOFT’s charter members.

Today, the practice of forensic toxicology has evolved greatly in response to the emergence of new psychoactive substances including cathinones, fentanyl and its analogues, and synthetic cannabinoids – drugs that are responsible for the deaths of thousands annually. These efforts, including the implementation of highly technical, time-of-flight mass spectrometry, have been spear-headed by young forensic toxicologists. I am often impressed at what has been accomplished since the introduction of these new techniques.

Through my roles as the Professor/Director at University of Florida, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Analytical Toxicology, and a long-time member of the SOFT, I have observed many young forensic toxicologists actively and passionately serving the community as volunteers, reviewers, and presenters. As I plan for my retirement, I am comforted knowing that our community of young forensic toxicologists are extraordinarily skilled and competent analytical toxicologists. The future of forensic toxicology is bright.

-Bruce

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE

Assistant Toxicologist, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, State of Maryland
Assistant Professor, Department of Pathology, University of Florida College of Medicine
Associate Professor, Department of Pathology, University of Florida College of Medicine
Professor, Department of Pathology, University of Florida College of Medicine
Chief, Forensic Medicine Division, Department of Pathology, University of Florida College of Medicine

IN Volvement IN SOFT

SOFT Website/IT Committee, Chair, 1997-2018
Board of Directors, 1998-2000
Board of Directors (ex officio), 2005-2010
Board of Directors, 2011-2018
SOFT 2013 Annual Meeting, Chair, 2009-2013
Secretary, 2014-2015
Vice President, 2016
President, 2017
Past-President, 2018
2020, the year we celebrate SOFT’s 50th Anniversary, will be particularly memorable – most likely because of the pandemic that has swept our world. I hope that one of the lessons we learn collectively, as people of a world that got very small, is that life and its celebrations truly continue in the wake of anxiety, disappointment, and fear. No matter its form, we will celebrate this milestone for SOFT. Many of us have been anticipating this, thinking about how to honor our collective professional history: the significant accomplishments of individuals who contributed to our profession, the advancements of technology in the last 5 decades, the developments and expansions of sub-disciplines in forensic tox, the quickly evolving culture and impact of newly emerging drugs...

What is important to understand is that we have already been engaged in the celebration – reminiscing the challenges, the laughter, the people – in small groups worldwide. And, also that every celebration is marked by a glance back before confidently and enthusiastically pointing forward. One of the most important reasons for an organization to overtly celebrate is to pass along the heritage, the mantle, the legacy of that which has come before to those who will be charged with its future. This means that, as Young Forensic Toxicologists, you are most important in our success. We honor our history to imbue passion, resilience, fortitude, creativity, and purpose.

As you embark in this career, my wish is that you embrace the understanding that you are the future and, no matter the role, you are part of the solution. So, be engaged – ask questions – understand that, even while you will not have all the answers, you can contribute to exploring hard questions with an amazing cohort of people who will challenge you and push further and then encourage you to have more courage.

So, always know that someone is paying attention – put forth your best effort. I would not be where I am if this was not true – from high school band member to first chair flautist and section leader, bench chemist to 3 patents at P&G, scared grad student to professor, a member in the crowd to SOFT President. I asked bad questions, naïve questions, proposed ridiculous things, and showed up – and, at every turn, someone else recognized something I did not see in myself and created miniscule to mountainous opportunities. And, I got excited about them, no matter how small or big. And, yes, I struggled with imposter syndrome. But, I still showed up and asked questions and did a lot of things.

Find your voice, find some courage, find the positive path forward, find a cache of mentors, find your next challenge. Be humble, but be bold. Take advantage of opportunities and turn a bad outcome into your next win.

-Michelle
TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE
Scientific Testing Laboratories: Negative certifying scientist to Non-negative manager
Virginia Commonwealth University, Department of Forensic Science: teacher & researcher scientist

INVolVEMENT IN SOFT
President – 2018
Vice President - 2017
Treasurer – 2015-2016
Board of Directors – 2012-2014
Co-host, Annual Meeting – Richmond, Virginia, 2010
Strategic Planning Committee
Finance Committee
Professional Mentoring Committee
History Committee
Culture, Value, and Diversity Committee
MESSAGE TO YOUNG TOXICOLOGISTS

Greetings Young Toxicologists,

I look back on my career with great satisfaction on what a wonderful profession I have been allowed to be a part of, and what great people have helped me along the way. Then I look at today and think, what an exciting time to be a forensic toxicologist! The early days of my career would probably seem like the wild west in comparison to all of the things we now do, like extensive validation, uncertainty assessment, etc., but this generation has awesome tools available that we did not have, like Triple quad, TOF, etc. I urge you to learn and take full advantage of the tools at your disposal, but never forget that for all the hard science and exacting data, you need to pay attention to the “art” of interpretation as well. This skill is in many ways an “art” gained from constant scholarship and the willingness to listen to the veterans in the field and gain from the experience of others. This is where your membership in SOFT is invaluable. Your membership affords you the unique opportunity to directly interface with some of the pioneers of forensic toxicology. While you may not think that your question or problem is worthwhile, I assure you that if you are asking it, so has someone else, and almost anyone will be willing to help you or direct you to someone who can. As you move forward in your career, heed the advice of those who went before. As my mentor, and previous SOFT President, always told me, “Boy, if you do good and treat people right, you will be okay.” I have found this to be true and still words to live by both professionally and personally. I wish you the greatest success in your career.

-Dwain

TOXICOLOGY EXPERIENCE
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, State of Oklahoma 1984-1987
Sierra Nevada Laboratories (Later Labcorp) 1987 - 1998
University of Texas Southwestern Medical School 1998-2008
Veterans Affairs North Texas Health Care System, 2008 to Present

INVOLVEMENT IN SOFT
I’ve served in the following roles: Policy and Procedures Committee, Publications Committee, Board Member (twice), Secretary, Vice President, and President
INCEPTION, HISTORY, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF SOFT
In 1970, a group of forensic toxicologists in the Nassau County Medical Examiner’s Office, headed by the late Abe Freireich, felt there was a need for an informal gathering of toxicologists between the annual meetings of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. The first meeting was held in October 1970 in Long Island, NY and was referred to as the "Interim Toxicology Meeting". Several prominent forensic toxicologists attended that first meeting, and one entire afternoon was spent discussing "Head Space Analysis of Volatiles". So much benefit and useful information was derived from this meeting that it was agreed by the attendees that this type of meeting should occur on an annual basis each fall to discuss various topics that were pertinent at that particular time. Informal meetings continued for two more years, and then a turning point occurred at the Philadelphia meeting in 1973. At this meeting, much discussion was generated about the formal organization of this unstructured group of toxicologists. The attendees believed that an organized group could do more to promote the cause of forensic toxicology, advance education, and ensure knowledgeable input into standards governing the profession.

Little did these visionaries know that what started as a small gathering has now blossomed into a thriving association with over 1,400 members. SOFT continues to host an annual meeting that includes workshops, scientific sessions, an exhibit hall, and networking events. Additionally, SOFT has expanded on its educational offerings and has hosted several regional workshops through the assistance of volunteers. As SOFT has grown over these past 50 years the need for oversight and leadership has helped form a Board of Directors and 19 committees that are comprised of volunteers and staff. Together these committees continue to help SOFT flourish and provide the field of toxicology with resources, professional development opportunities, and most importantly, a community of support.

We are grateful to these individuals who had the foresight to see the value of an organization like SOFT, and the opportunities it provides to its membership. We appreciate their contributions to our field, but also their determination to provide a space for forensic toxicologists to come together to learn, network and grow professionally. We look forward to 50 more years!
A TIMELINE OF OUR HISTORY

PRESIDENT

1970

ABE FREIREICH

10/15: First informal meeting at the Nassau County M.E. Office hosted by Abe Freireich.

1973

JANE SPEAKER

11/16: Minutes of 4th annual Interim Toxicology Meeting in Nassau Co. NY reports that the name "Society of Forensic Toxicologists" was proposed and adopted. Additional motions to create and incorporate an official seal, and to establish a newsletter were discussed.

Dal Cortivo reported that a number of names were proposed by the nomenclature committee. All the names were discussed. Dal Cortivo pointed out that "Society of Forensic Toxicologists" was the only name suggested by all members of the committee. He moved that this name be adopted. The motion was seconded by Schweda, and a unanimous "Yea" vote was recorded. The committee resolved that any discussion from the general membership would be taken under advisement.

12/14: First draft of the bylaws was created and discussed officer positions, terms, duties, membership types, and membership qualification criteria.

1974

ARTHUR MCBAY

04/26: Four initial temporary officers were appointed to proceed with incorporation paperwork:
President - Jane Speaker, Ph.D., DABFT
Vice President - Abe Freireich, MD
Secretary - Leon Bednarczyk
Treasurer - Jesse Bidanset, Ph.D., E/ABFT
09/01: The first ToxTalk newsletter was published before the Chapel Hill, NC meeting.

WHAT IS TOX TALK??????

Now that the summer is over and the hassles of coordinating our vacation schedules are behind us, I'd like to keep a promise I made to you at the Philadelphia Interim Toxicology Meeting in October. That promise was to initiate a Newsletter to provide a means of communication for our interested members.

My proposal at that time was that the articles (to be published) should include:
1. Interesting case histories and analytical procedures in the form of a "Case of the Month". I'm enclosing a reporting format which closely resembles that of TIAFT.
2. Educational Opportunities Listing: University Seminars, Short Courses, & Work Shops
3. Employment Opportunities: If you have or know of an available position, please give a brief description of the duties, qualifications, and any other pertinent information concerning the position.
4. Up-to-date reportage of our organization's committee activity and progress. During these months of organization, it is hoped that our Newsletter will keep you informed of all proposals, and as sections of the by-laws and constitution come out of committee, they will be presented to our members for their comments. For example, the Chairperson's "MESSAGE" inquires about your attitude toward incorporation, and we DO want your comments.

One of the early newsletters will also include a roster of individuals who have attended at least one of the interim meetings. Another suggestion was to list the names of forensic-oriented laboratories and their directors.

Providing we have sufficient material (and my "cooperative" secretary stops glaring hostilely when I put copy on her desk), I will attempt to issue a comprehensive Newsletter quarterly.

In the time remaining before the Chapel Hill Meeting, please read over the minutes of the Committee Meetings so that we can move ahead smoothly.

10/18: At the October 18, 1974 Business Meeting in Chapel Hill, "National" was added to the name, National Society of Forensic Toxicologists, but was removed in 1976.

1975

05/14: SOFT was incorporated in the state of Delaware.

Delaware
The First State

The importance of certification in relation to the professional standing of individual toxicologists and laboratories was stressed. SOFT Ad-hoc committees at the time were Political Action (to be renamed Government and Inter-professional Relations), Educational Opportunities, Laboratory Survey, and Laboratory accreditation. The income from 1976 annual meeting was $58.53.

1977

Dues were $20 for full members and $10 for associate members. Job opportunities had posted salary range of $10,600-$15,800.
Workshops offered - "Chromatography in the Chemical Laboratory" and "Forensic Infrared"
Discussion Groups: "Propoxyphene (methods, case histories, statistics, interpretation, etc.)

1978

Proficiency testing was proposed. It was first suggested that SOFT pursue with the Journal of Analytical Toxicology a liaison relationship utilizing JAT as the official journal of SOFT. Workshops offered: "The Toxicological Attack" and "Pharmaceutical Products: Research & Development, Toxicity Studies, Analytical Parameters, Application to Forensic Toxicology"

12/08: At a Dec. 8, 1978 BOD meeting, it was noted that the Society needed to develop a logo for stationery, membership cards, brochures, etc. Also a need for a brochure describing goals and purposes of SOFT was discussed.

1979

01/30: The Board of Directors decided to pursue a relationship with the Journal of Analytical Toxicology, to utilize JAT as the official journal of the Society.
04/01: SOFT's membership reached 110 members.
08/01: SOFT agreed to sponsor a "Special Issue" of JAT.
1980

LEONARD BEDNARCZYK

Dues increase proposal voted down to keep dues low in hopes of attracting bench-forensic-toxicologists. First SOFT Education Award presented to John Hebb, Jr. under the direction of Yale Caplan for his investigation of "Forensic Interpretation of Tricyclic Antidepressant Drug Deaths". A SOFT Awards committee was proposed. Over 100 attendees at the 1980 SOFT annual meeting held jointly with the Canadian Society of Forensic Sciences. Annual meeting income was $2,652.

1981

YALE CAPLAN

The annual meeting expanded to a 3 day program. Dues increased by $5 for full members from $20 to $25.

1982

JOSEPH BALKon

Workshops were offered on Thin Layer Chromatography and Pharmacokinetics which attracted 65 attendees. Committee to List Acceptable Methods (Method Validation) was proposed.

1983

EVERETT SOLOMONS

12/16: SOFT was granted an IRS tax exemption status under section 501 (c)(6). Original ToxTalk Editor, Jesse Bidanset, handed over editorial duties to Yale Caplan and Marina Stajic. ToxTalk took on a new look and the new editors decided to publish 4 issues per year.

1984

JOSEPH MONFORTE

02/22: The SOFT Board approved a proposal to retain an individual designated as an executive meeting coordinator at a total cost not to exceed $1000. Workshops offered at annual meeting: "Computers in Toxicology" and "Advanced Toxi-Lab" with nearly 100 participants.
09/01: The first International Member (Switzerland) joined SOFT.

1985

RICHARD PROUTY

12/01: Membership reached 220; 163 full, charter, or retired members, 43 associate members, and 14 student members.
1986

ROSEMARY KINCAID

June: SOFT established Archives - A depository for documentation of SOFT activities or items of historical interest. Past Secretaries were requested to submit official minutes of business, board meeting minutes, and committee reports.

11/07: Prominent toxicologist and founder of the American Academy of Forensic Toxicologists, The International Association of Forensic Toxicologists, and the California Association of Toxicologists, Raymond J. Abernethy passed away.

1987

H. HORTON MCCURDY

New HHS and NIDA guidelines designed for urine drug testing laboratories created a hotbed of controversy due to the concerns about their applicability directly or indirectly to the conventional medical examiner's forensic toxicology laboratories.

1988

MICHAEL MCGEE

Sept/Oct 1989 special issue of JAT was dedicated to forensic toxicology and drug testing in sports.

09/30: Decision was made to change SOFT fiscal year to coincide with the calendar year. This was done to ensure the change coincides with changing of SOFT's officers.

1991

WILLIAM ANDERSON

03/01: Membership reached 337 members; 34 Charter, 2 Retired, 207 Full, 83 Associate, 11 Student.

1994

MARK LEWIS

03/01: SOFT held its first joint meeting with TIAFT in Tampa, FL. Horton McCurdy and Marilyn Huestis served as meeting co-hosts.

Bridging the World of Forensic Toxicology
03/01: The Board of Directors voted to create a SOFT website and redesign the SOFT logo. The SOFT website went live on April 2, 1997 with the help of Bruce Goldberger serving as webmaster.

09/01: The 1st Tox n' Purge 5k Fun Run was held at the Utah SOFT 1997 annual meeting, it was organized by Karla Moore.
1998

JOSEPH SAADY

12/01: "Was It Poisoning? Forensic Toxicologists Searching for Answers", initiated, compiled, and edited by Irving Sunshine was published. Each member of SOFT received a free copy.

1999

MARILYN HUESTIS

03/01: A new Ad Hoc Committee on Continuing Education was established because of the high importance of this need and the value it brings to SOFT. Christine Moore was asked to be the first chair of this new committee.

09/01: SOFT hosted its first regional workshop in Albany, NY and was presented by Jen Limoges.

2001

MICHAEL SMITH

09: SOFT hosted 2001 meeting in New Orleans despite September 11, 2001 terrorist attack.

2002

LAUREL FARRELL

03/01: SOFT implemented a broadcast messaging system to email members important messages. Membership reached 610 members.

2003

AMANDA JENKINS

03/01: The SOFT 2003 Portland, OR meeting was the first to offer online registration.
2004

DANIEL ISENSCHMID

03/01: SOFT created the Awards Committee and includes the ERA and YSMA awards.
09/01: Membership reached 711 members; 525 Full, 20 Charter, 120 Associate, 14 Retired, 17 Retired Charter; 15 Student

2005

GRAHAM R. JONES

The annual SOFT meeting reached 800 registrations.

2006

TIMOTHY ROHRIG

06/01: SOFT opened its first official office in Mesa, Arizona.

The deaths of two prominent forensic leaders, Fredric Rieders and Irving Sunshine, prompted a new annual memorial Silent Auction to be organized in both their names.

Dr. Fredric Rieders

Dr. Irving Sunshine
03/01: The "Student Enrichment Program" was launched, to provide a free one day educational program to share forensic toxicology focused lectures and provide an opportunity for qualifying students to meet and learn from the current leaders in the field.

03/15: Membership reached 880 members.

04/01: The annual Fun Run was re-named the "Karla Moore" Memorial Fun Run, in memory of her tireless efforts that created the Fun Run.

Dr. Karla Moore

2008

A new award entitled “Experimental Design and Impact on Toxicology” (EDIT) was instituted to recognize the first author of a paper published in the SOFT Special Issue of JAT, which, in the opinion of the judges, shows excellent scientific experimental design and has a wide impact on the field.

For the first time at a SOFT meeting, interpreters for the deaf and hearing impaired were made available for the scientific sessions.
2009

ANTHONY COSTANTINO

09/01: SOFT established the Young Forensic Toxicologists Committee (YFT). Members are Forensic Toxicologists who are 41 years or younger. Membership reaches 974 members; 677 Full, 210 Assoc., 31 Student, 28 Retired, 14 Charter, 14 Charter Retired.

2010

BRADFORD HEPLER

03/01: The Board of Directors approved distributing ToxTalk by email only and eliminating the printed issue. All copies have been archived on the SOFT website.

2011

SARAH KERRIGAN

June: the revised Ethics Procedures were approved by the Board of Directors and were posted in the member only section of the SOFT website. The newly approved SOFT Code of Ethics and Guiding Principles of Professional Responsibility were also added to the website.

2012

MARC LEBEAU

09/01: The surviving spouse of deceased member and past President, Leo Dal Cortivo, generously donated $50,000 to SOFT to be used in a manner to keep her husband's memory alive. The Board determined that those funds would be used as award incentive for two qualifying young toxicologists each year, that were determined to produce the best poster presentation and the best platform presentation at the annual meeting. The winners also receive complementary meeting registration to the next annual meeting. The award has been named in memory of Leo Dal Cortivo.
2013

SOFT began the tradition of recognizing long-term members with an anniversary service pin at their 20, 30 and 40 year anniversary.

Total membership reached 1,100 and 212 members were recognized with the service pin.

2014

At the Direction of the National Commission on Forensic Science (NCFS), the Organisation of the Scientific area Committess (OSAC) was created with oversight from the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB). Several SOFT memebers were appointed to serve in various parts of this organisation.

01/30: Membership reached 1229 members.

2015

The Board of Directors approved funds for development of a new continuing education activity to make CE credits available FREE of charge to SOFT members through the website. The activity involves reading a JAT article and answering a set of multiple-choice questions about the content. Participants receive ACCENT credits for completing the activity.

2016

09/01: Longtime employee, Bonnie Fulmer, retired and SOFT hired its first Executive Director, Beth Olson, and Operations and Social Media Manger, CC Watson to oversee the day to day operations of SOFT.
2017
09/01: SOFT was forced to reschedule the 2017 joint annual meeting with TIAFT due to Hurricane Irma. Even though the reschedule was a huge undertaking for the 2017 planning committee, the board, and staff, the meeting was successful and included 17 workshops, 186 platform presentations and 221 poster presentations. The meeting hotel had limited dates to reschedule the joint meeting so the meeting was rescheduled in January of 2018, forcing SOFT to hold two meetings in one calendar year.

2018
The SOFT Bylaws were revised and the Board voted to create a Finance Committee to provide strategic direction to the Board in financial matters. The newly formed Finance Committee exercised its first year with a new quarterly internal audit process.

2019
07/10: After reviewing cost saving options the Board of Directors voted to close the SOFT office and have the SOFT staff transition to working from home. SOFT anticipated an annual savings of $20,000.
10/13: The SOFT 2019 annual meeting in San Antonio, TX was the largest non-joint meeting to date with 1,089 meeting attendees.

2020
2020 was the inaugural year for the SOFT Mentorship Program and included 41 mentor-mentee pairs that participated in the program.
01/27: The SOFT Board voted to institute 4 new SOFT awards.
02/28: Membership reached 1,481 members; 364 Associate, 6 Charter, 12 Emeritus, 1,021 Full, 10 retired, 14 Retired Charter, and 54 students.
05/21: SOFT Board of Directors made the difficult decision to cancel the Annual Meeting scheduled for September 2020 in San Diego, CA due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board of Directors approved providing virtual continuing education opportunities in lieu of the annual meeting to support the continuing education requirements of members. A working group was formed to help facilitate the virtual program dubbed "SOFTember".
09/01: SOFT launched its first virtual program, SOFTember. Virtual programming is offered live and on demand and includes an opening session, plenary session, workshops, scientific sessions, poster sessions, SOFTopics discussion groups, virtual exhibit hall, committee meetings and the annual business meeting.
Thank you to our past meeting hosts for their input on the design of the annual meeting logo, we appreciate your contributions of pieces of our toxicology world and highlighting the host city. These two features have become key elements that guide the design process each year. We look forward to seeing future annual meeting logos!
MESSAGES FROM SOFT MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to my former, current and future mentors <3. To 50 more years of folks coming together to do the work they love better - cheers!
- Sue Pearring

I don’t manage to come to SOFT every year. But when I do, I bring back so much science and good memories with me, that I am good for long!
- Alberto Salomone

A big congratulations to SOFT on its 50th anniversary! I’m very much looking forward to what the future has in store!
- Michael Fagiola

Wishing SOFT a happy 50th anniversary! Thank you for providing toxicologists with valuable resources. Looking forward to the next meeting!
- Ola Bawardi

SOFT consists of smart, original, friendly, and talented professionals! I am grateful for having them as my colleagues. Long live SOFT!
- Dayong Lee

Congratulations SOFT on your 50th anniversary! A big thanks for all you do to promote forensic toxicology!
- Dawn Hahn

I have been a member of SOFT for over 18 years and cannot express how important SOFT has been to my career. SOFT is my second family.
- Tate Yeatman

Isaac Newton wrote If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants. Thanks SOFT for providing “giant” opportunities!
- Ruth Winecker

Such a great initiative of mentor/mentee professional mentoring program. Thanks a lot for this wonderful opportunity.
- Manoj Tyagi

Who remembers the gigantic ask of pills, tablets, and capsules on display at the Maryland Medical Laboratory?
- Prentiss Jones

With enduring gratitude for so much knowledge, great support, and so many friends! Loving SOFT! Loving America from Spain!
- Maria Antonia Martinez
MESSAGES FROM SOFT MEMBERSHIP

I joined SOFT in the late 70's when the annual meetings could have been held in large closets! SOFT has come a long way! Congratulations!
- C. Nicholas Hodnett

Congratulations to SOFT! It is the only organization that challenges a toxicologist to truly understand the effects of alcohol intoxication.
- Jeff Walterscheid

Fifty years is a long trip--may the high never end! Congrats on advancing our careers and knowledge through education and networking.
- Clinton Frazee

Congratulations SOFT for 50 years! There is no better organization for sharing Toxicology knowledge and meeting great colleagues & friends!
- Diane Mertens-Maxham

SOFT has come a long way contributing to the field of forensic toxicology and inspiring us the members. Job well done! Congratulations!
- Adam Negrusz

Happy Birthday SOFT! 50 years of drugs and still looking good.
- Lorna Nisbet

Happy 50th anniversary. I always enjoyed going to SOFT meetings and wish SOFT many happy returns. Warm greetings from Belgium.
- Alain Verstraete

SOFT has provided an excellent opportunity for continuing education to forensic toxicologists like me of developing countries. Appreciated!
- Humera Shaﬁ

SOFT Puerto Rico Old San Juan- lovely city, great feast & torrential rain. Did it stop us? We danced all night in the warm rain. Magical!
- Marilyn Huestis

My kids learned JoJo-isms: no one learns anything from talking; everyone has problems, don’t make your problems my problems; try and act normal.
- Joe Saady

I joined SOFT in the early 80’s and what a wonderful experience it has been. I met so many amazing members from whom I learned so much.
- Mahmoud ElSohly
MESSAGES FROM SOFT MEMBERSHIP

Know what you don't know, ask interesting questions, question everything, and don't panic.
- Sarah Urfer

No other professional organization is more warm and welcoming than SOFT. They are the extended family you want to spend the holidays with.
- Elisa Shoff

“We learn and we party!” That should be the Society’s motto, haha! Always a great time at SOFT Meetings with old and new friends.
- Vincent Villena

NMS Labs is proud that SOFT and NMS Labs both celebrate their Golden Anniversaries in 2020! Congratulations and here’s to the next 50!
- Barry Logan

Congratulations SOFT! We recognize all our past hosts for 50 years of enriching meetings.
Doug Rohde / Shelly Crosby
Cleveland 2022 hosts
PICTORIAL HISTORY
Fluoro- and Methyl-Ephedrine Metabolites in Routine Testing for Designer Stimulants

INTRODUCTION
Designer stimulants—synthetic derivatives of caffeine, such as methylephedrine and methylamphetamine—became popular as club drugs in Europe and now in the United States. They are marketed as both solids, plants, food, or room odours. Likewise, the number of similar drugs available for public harm has grown considerably.

Redwood Toxicology Laboratory performs routine testing for parent designer stimulants for the last eight months. Based on the analysis of over 5,000 samples, typical excretion profiles for designer synthetic cathinones have been obtained in free urines—new drugs and their reduced metabolites.

RESULTS

A substantial number of specimens in this group were identified the contained reduced metabolites, but not the parent drugs as shown by gas chromatography.

Although a small number of specimens were identified the contained reduced metabolites by mass spectrometry.

CONCLUSIONS
Mechanisms, identification and analysis of non-parent reduced metabolites remain to be used in clinical ephedrines.

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