



Occupational Therapy Centennial Celebration Influential Leaders Nomination Form

Name of Nominee: Lois Marie Barber, OTR, FAOTA

Rationale for Nomination and Substantiation of Influence

It is my honor to nominate Lois Marie Barber for consideration as one of the Influential Leaders to be recognized by the profession for the Centennial Celebration. Lois distinguished herself as a leader in occupational therapy by founding the first hand rehabilitation clinic in the Western United States at the Downey Community Hospital in Downey CA; developing and patenting her own brand of prefabricated (wire foam) splints and founding her own successful business to fabricate, market and sell these splints (LMB) to therapists throughout the US and the world. Both the hand clinic and the business she developed showcased Lois' belief in the centrality of occupation to occupational therapy. Lois earned a reputation for 15 years of excellent client treatment at Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center where she developed treatment protocols and equipment, and published articles and treatment guides that reflected that excellence. She planned for the hand center to employ high quality crafts including leather and woodworking to engage the hand injured patient in treatment that highlighted the advantage of using the hand in a functional manner as opposed to rote exercise. In conducting her splint manufacturing business, she always employed those who needed a role model and assistance to develop their work skills – thus contributing their vocational rehabilitation as well. She hired a local sheltered workshop to provide assistance with packaging and she planned philanthropic events involving her employees and the community such as a barbecue to raise funds for the Special Olympics.

It was my honor to work with and get to know Lois when I was a student and then staff OT at Rancho. She was an OT instructor and Co-director of Upper Extremity and Device Research who helped novice OTs with solving orthotic and equipment related problems such as the challenging Mobile Arm Support. Lois was an incredible instructor and mentor who embodied the essence of occupational therapy in everything she did. For us up-and-coming OTs – who all wanted to emulate her – she showed the way to be a dedicated, highly principled, creative, successful and giving occupational therapist.

Her creativity was/is legend. She once found and purchased a myriad of small mechanical motors, puzzling over what she could do with them. Lois came up with the “Happy Clapper”, the “Happy Greeter” and numerous other motorized art pieces that were Copyrighted, produced by her company “Hand Made by Happy Things” and sold throughout the US. To this day Lois donates these unique objects to OT fund raising auctions (CFOT and AOTF etc.) and they are always a highly prized and lucrative item.

She has a workshop at her home and spends as much time as she can there creating new “toys”. Along with her professional and business accomplishments Lois is a dog lover who has



rehabilitated numerous canines – most recently a hyperactive terrier for whom she located a dog treadmill and planned a daily regime to help “Mickey” expend his energy in a productive manner.

In conclusion, Lois Barber’s dedication to occupational therapy, her vision and forethought to recognize the importance of establishing a high-quality program dedicated to rehabilitation of the hand coupled with her creativity and skill to develop and manufacture prefabricated handsplints are significant contributions to the profession. Her contributions continue to provide quality intervention and products to clients as well as to inspire occupational therapists with a role model for career expansion into new areas of treatment and entrepreneurial pursuits. I believe that these accomplishments establish Lois as an Influential Leader and she is deserving of this recognition for the Centennial Celebration.

Major Accomplishments of Professional Leadership Position(s):

- Establishing the highly successful Downey Hand Clinic at Downey Community Hospital in Downey CA
- Developing, fabricating, patenting, marketing the LMB series of prefabricated hand splints, (now available through DeRoyal and other catalogs)
- Establishing her own successful splint company in San Luis Obispo CA to manufacture and distribute the LMB splints (ultimately sold to Rehabilitation Technologies Inc –RTI)

Dates and Names of Professional Awards and Honors:

- Roster of Fellows of the AOTA - FAOTA: 1979
- Honorary member of the American Society of Hand Therapists (see attached from ASHT website)
- Distinguished Alumna of the Year 2000: San Jose State University, Occupational Therapy

Awards for her Environmental and Peace Activism:

- Broad Street Pump Award from Physicians for Social Responsibility (see attached OT Week article from December 17, 1992 and prs.org)
- Woman of the Year: Cuesta College, San Luis Obispo, CA (see attached OT Week Article)

Professional Publications (provide full reference):



- L.M. Barber: Desensitization of the traumatized hand. Rehabilitation of the Hand, 1990 – CV Mosby St. Louis, MO
- NW Hochreiter, MJ Jewell, L Barber, P Browne –Effect of Vibration on Tactile Sensitivity. Physical Therapy, 1983. Ptjournal.apta.org
- EJ Yerxa, LM Barber, O Diaz. Development of a hand sensitivity test for the hypersensitive hand. American Journal of Occupational Therapy. 1983 Ajot.aota.org
- DJ Wilson, MW McKenzie, LM Barber. Spinal cord injury: A treatment guide for occupational therapists. 1974. Slack Inc.

Documentation of Major Non-published Accomplishments:

- Hand Made by Happy Things – Copyright © Lois M. Barber