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Fred W. Sammons and Barbara A. Rider: Foundational Sponsors

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Fred W. Sammons and Barbara A. Rider: Foundational Sponsors



Dr. Barbara A. Rider and Dr. Fred W. Sammons are dedicated contributors to the profession of occupational therapy (OT). Both Barbara and Fred have been active in the field for over 40 years, and continue to inspire growth in the profession. Barbara's early career included clinical practice in the Veteran's Administration Hospital and in a specialized school for children with disabilities. In addition, she produced foundational research in the areas of sensory integration and developmental reflexes. Barbara then moved to the academic world, holding several academic appointments including an appointment as chair of the Western Michigan University OT (WMU OT) department from 1976-1986. It was during this time that she reflected on the value of her prior research and instilled this value of research into the WMU OT faculty members. She was among the first occupational therapists to prioritize research as a part of education and practice, and she required faculty members to participate in scholarship and higher education activities. As her career moved forward, she continued to practice, educate, research, lead, and invest in the advancement of the OT profession. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) honored Barbara in 2003 with the Lindy Boggs Award, recognizing her many contributions to the profession. Now retired, she continues to publish, educate, and practice OT with children and adults who have developmental disabilities and mental health disorders. She describes the profession as "unbelievably gratifying" and lights up when talking about the patients with whom she works.

Fred has also been an essential participant in the establishment and growth of the OT profession. His background in engineering and his dedication to helping people with disabilities engage in self care, leisure, and social pursuits led him to work closely with occupational therapists. The honorary doctorate in OT, awarded by the WMU OT department, recognizes the many contributions he has made to the profession. In his early years,

he pioneered the design, manufacture, and distribution of adaptive equipment, collaborating with occupational therapists and patients to identify needs and to generate product ideas. Additionally, Fred provided AOTA with its first computer, demonstrating that he has always had an eye on the future and technological advances. The recipient of many honors from AOTA, he continues to give to the profession through grants, scholarships, and donations that support research, education, and clinical programs. In his retirement, he has been an active member of AMBUCS, Inc. with whom he collaborates to develop designs for adapted bicycles and tricycles (AmTrykes) for children with disabilities. He expresses great pride in his innovative seating system and in the ways in which he has been able to adapt these bikes to each child's needs. His love for innovation and technology that help others has been present throughout his life and continues today.

Both Barbara and Fred have expressed excitement about the development of the Open Journal of Occupational Therapy (OJOT). For both, this journal means that OT practitioners will have access to the latest research, and that the research itself will strengthen the validity of the profession. Barbara indicates that because of OJOT "we will be able to share the value of OT with other disciplines." Fred, always an innovative thinker, notes that the open access aspect of the journal means that, "everyone who has a thumb drive will have a library at their fingertips." Their sponsorship of and contribution to the establishment of OJOT is unmatched and the Editorial Board is forever grateful for their support.

Written by: Molly Bathje, MS, OTR/L

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