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OJOT Sponsor Profiles

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Katherine A. Lawson, OTR, LMSSW, PhD

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Sponsor Profile: Katherine A. Lawson, OTR, LMSSW, PhD



Katherine A. Lawson, OTR, LMSSW, PhD, is generously sponsoring the Fall 2014 issue of *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy* (OJOT). Dr. Lawson provides the sponsorship in response to the inspiration and opportunity that OJOT has provided to her. Her vision for the future of the occupational therapy (OT) profession aligns with the goals of OJOT, and she hopes her sponsorship will help ensure the journal's success.

Dr. Lawson began her professional career as a graduate of The University of Texas at Arlington's Masters of Social Work program. While working as a social worker in a home-health setting, Dr. Lawson continued her education and achieved her goal of becoming an occupational therapist by graduating with a bachelor's degree in OT from The University of Texas at El Paso and The University of Texas at Galveston Cooperative Program. She continued to work in home health, serving in dual roles as both a social worker and an occupational therapist. In 2008, her mother passed away as the result of a fall. This personal experience prompted Dr. Lawson's interest in investigating falls among older adults. She embarked on a course of study at The University of Texas, El Paso that culminated in her dissertation, which explores the complex issues surrounding falls. Dr. Lawson received her PhD in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences in 2013 and she continues her line of research into falls and engages in clinical practice to decrease falls in older adults. Currently, she is part of an interdisciplinary team of

health professionals providing home-based personal care services (HBPC) through the El Paso Veterans Administration. She functions as the only occupational therapist on the team and addresses the home modification and rehabilitation needs of each of the veterans she evaluates. The program is unique because it provides comprehensive interdisciplinary care in a home-health setting.

Dr. Lawson published her dissertation research on falls in the [Summer 2014 issue of OJOT](#) and created a “Breakout” [on-line module](#) through the OJOT and [MedBridge partnership](#). She indicated that she was initially inspired to become involved in OJOT after speaking with Dr. Diane Powers Dirette, Editor-in-Chief of OJOT, at the AOTA annual conference a few years ago. When Dr. Lawson heard about Dr. Powers Dirette’s vision for OJOT, including the unique open access approach to promoting research and the dedicated group of professionals involved in initiating the journal, she immediately expressed interest. In particular, she has been inspired by Fred Sammons, founding co-sponsor of OJOT and an OJOT Advisory Board member. Dr. Lawson has memories of Fred Sammons from when she was a student, noting his generosity with student scholarships and his financial investments in research and evidence-based practice. His philanthropy in support of the OT profession, along with his predictable participation in every annual AOTA conference, has prompted Dr. Lawson to engage in support of the profession through publishing, serving on the OJOT Editorial Review Board, and through the sponsorship this issue. Dr. Lawson has also been impressed with the collaborative approach OJOT has taken through increasing evidence-based practice, which includes bringing together researchers, clinicians, and academics from across the country to serve on the Editorial, Editorial Review, and Advisory Boards. She has noted everyone’s enthusiasm to work together, despite university affiliation, practice area, or geographic location.

During her own career as a clinician, academic, and student, Dr. Lawson has demonstrated the power of collaboration. Her current research and practice demonstrate her belief that complex problems, such as falls in the elderly, benefit from multifaceted and interdisciplinary approaches. She believes that OT practitioners working in clinical settings should be answering questions about why their interventions work through the publication of research. She believes that OJOT provides an opportunity and the resources to improve OT practitioner participation and the use of research. Dr. Lawson is enthusiastic about the future of OJOT and hopes that her sponsorship helps solidify a successful future for OJOT and the profession of OT.

Written by: Molly Bathje, MS, OTR/L

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