

25 Years of ATP: Janet Patterson

For several years I was part of ATP, supervising graduate students, participating in ATP activities, and engaging in research, and in that time, I watched ATP flourish into the well-established program I inherited from Dr. Avent. During my tenure as ATP Director the program grew by entering the world of social media. At that time social media had a much smaller footprint in the world than it does now. ATP members, clinicians and volunteers were leaders in joining aphasia and social media, creating opportunities for individuals with aphasia to access and use social media, many of which remain part of contemporary ATP. We established email communication groups within ATP as well as the ATP Facebook page (Aphasia and TBI Groups). Together with aphasia groups at Western Michigan University and the University of Pretoria, South Africa, we launched the first-ever Facebook conversation group created and managed by individuals with aphasia and graduate clinicians. We collaborated on a project investigating cybersafety, with ATP members providing insight into successful Internet use and the potential for scams. Since the early accomplishments of ATP members and clinicians, the role of social media within aphasiology and ATP has expanded in so many unanticipated directions. I am grateful to those early adopters in ATP for paving the way for those who followed.

When I think of ATP, I smile and take great pride in knowing both the individuals with aphasia who participated in the program and the clinicians who worked tirelessly to provide an exemplary and forward-thinking program. Individuals with aphasia have many paths they might take in their aphasia journey, and I recall with great fondness and humility the way in which ATP members addressed the joys, challenges, projects, times of sadness, frustrations, and fun that comprise daily life with aphasia. I am grateful that I was able to be a part of ATP, to meet so many wonderful and gracious individuals living with and without aphasia, and to maintain and foster the incredible sense of community and vision that embodies ATP.