

Meet Our NEACSM Past President



NEACSM's 9th Past President: William Jay Gillespie, Ed.D., FACSME

Education: Ed.D., Boston University, Boston, MA, 1977; M.Ed., Northeastern University, Boston, MA, 1967; B.S., Northeastern University, Boston, MA, 1965

Current or most recent affiliation: Northeastern University, 1965-2011; Professor Emeritus of Health Sciences; Director, Graduate Program in Exercise Science, 1980-2011; Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Bouve College of Health Sciences, 2005-08; Chair, Department of Cardiopulmonary and Exercise Sciences, 1999-2006; Director, Cardiovascular Health and Exercise Center, 1978-1999.

Honors & Awards: Fellow, American College of Sports Medicine, 1983; Honor Award, New England Chapter, ACSM, 1990; President NEACSM, 1980-81; President, Massachusetts Society for Cardiac Rehabilitation, 1985-86; University Scholar, Scholars' Days, Northeastern University, 1981 & 1989; Member, Kappa Delta Pi, Honor Society in Education, inducted 1965.

Professional Interests: My major academic and research interest was pursuing the understanding and furthering the role of exercise in health and disease. In the pursuit of this I developed an undergraduate major in Cardiovascular Health and Exercise and a Master's Program in Clinical Exercise Physiology at Northeastern University and developed and taught a graduate course in Exercise in Health and Disease. My major professional interest was promoting the role and status of the Clinical Exercise Physiologist in society. In pursuit of this goal I served on the ACSM Certification Committee (1986-93), the ACSM Committee on Registration and Licensure (1992-94), and was one of the founding members of the ACSM Clinical Exercise Physiology Registry Board (1997-2002). I also was one of the founding members and first president of the Massachusetts Society for Cardiac Rehabilitation, 1985-86, which later became the Massachusetts affiliate of the Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation

NEACSM Service

1. What first inspired you to enter the Exercise Science/Sports Medicine Field? What made you decide to pursue your advance degree and/or line of research/service?

I decided to enroll in the doctoral program at Boston University mainly due to the reputation of Dr. Howard "Skip" Knuttgen and the ability to combine course work with the College of Education and Sargent College of Allied Health. My mentors were Dr. Roger Soule, my dissertation advisor, who I assisted teaching his undergraduate exercise physiology labs; and Walter Sembrowich, the Director of the Exercise Physiology Research Lab, who taught me the fundamentals of learning blood lactic acid assays and Maximal Oxygen Uptake treadmill testing using Douglas Bags, Tissot Gasometer, and Scholander techniques, the forerunners of today's electronic equipment.

2. As a student, who were your mentors and what role did they play in your professional development? As a professional, was there anyone who was also instrumental in your career development?

As a freshman undergraduate student at Northeastern University I had Dr. George Lane, Director of the University Health Services as a professor of Anatomy and Physiology. He treated the class like we were first year medical students which really motivated me to study the structure and function of the human body and jolted me into making the transition from high school to college study habits. Later, as a young instructor I taught Anatomy and Physiology for 12 years before teaching Exercise Physiology for another 12 years due mainly to Dr. Lane's influence. As a professional I admired the work of Dr. Michael Pollock, Dr. Jack Wilmore, and Dr. Sam Fox who were pioneers in exercise in health and disease and cardiac rehabilitation. I attended one of the early workshops for the ACSM Exercise Test Technologist in 1977 at the University of Wisconsin, Lacrosse, run by Dr. Phillip Wilson who inspired me to become involved in the ACSM certification process and serve on the certification committee. Locally, Dr. Jack Fox, Chair of the Department of Physical Education at

Northeastern University who had enough faith in me to hire me as a young graduate of the department in 1965. He also taught me to be a professional as he led by example. And Dr. Carl Christensen, my second department chair, who gave me the freedom and encouragement to develop undergraduate and graduate programs in exercise science as well as the Cardiovascular Health and Exercise Center at Northeastern. The Center provided exercise testing, adult fitness and cardiac rehabilitation programs for thousands of participants in the greater Boston community as well as two large corporations in Boston for twenty years.

3. What is it about Exercise Science/Sports Medicine that still inspires you today?

I continue to follow research into the role of physical activity and fitness in disease prevention and rehabilitation.

4. Why and how did you decide to get involved with NEACSM? How did your service help you grow as a professional?

I began attending meetings of the New England Exercise Physiology Interest Group in the late 1960s and early 1970s at Boston University, Springfield College, U Mass Amherst, University of Connecticut and Northeastern University which later became the New England Chapter of ACSM. I continued to attend most all of the annual meetings of NEACSM as well as ACSM until my retirement in 2011. I became active in various committees and Boards of Trustees of both NEACSM and ACSM.

5. What are your most memorable moments from your service to NEACSM?

The most memorable time was when I was President Elect of NEACSM in 1979-80 and I was responsible for planning the annual meeting where we, for the first time, moved from a university campus to a hotel convention center. The meeting was held at the Radisson Ferncroft Hotel in Danvers, Massachusetts in November, 1980. The theme of the meeting was the Exercising Adult. Dr. Robert Cantu, who followed me as President, edited the proceedings of that meeting and published a book entitled, "The Exercise Adult" published by the Collamore Press in 1982. The theme of the following year's annual meeting was "Sports Medicine - Exercise Science; Bridging the Gap," the proceeding of which were edited by Dr. Cantu and myself and was published in 1983.

6. What were some of the main issues confronting NEACSM at the time of your presidency?

How to grow the chapter and make it more financially independent and move the annual meetings from university campuses to hotel convention sites to accommodate the larger numbers of attendees.

7. What do you think are your most meaningful contributions to NEACSM?

During my three years on the Executive Committee as President-elect, President and past-President the annual meeting which were held on college campuses with 150-200 attendees we moved to hotel convention centers with 500-600 attendees. We created the NEACSM Board of Trustees, composed of past presidents, which has made valuable contribution to the chapter over the years. I also introduced the Pre-Conference Workshop on Cardiac Rehabilitation which preceded the annual meeting and was very successful for many years.

8. What do you think are your most meaningful contributions to the field of Exercise Science/Sports Medicine?

I feel my most meaningful contribution to the field was the creation of the ACSM Clinical Exercise Physiology Registry Board. The goal of this effort was to elevate the Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist to be on the same level with the Registered Physical Therapist, Registered Nurse, and other registered professionals in the medical and allied health field.

9. What advice would you have for future leaders of NEACSM?

If you have a vision for change for the good for the chapter and the profession then pursue it and don't let the forces to maintain the status quo stand in your way.

10. What advice would you give to students who are looking to pursue a career in Exercise Science/Sports Medicine?

Develop good study habits and discipline early as a student, because this is what is required for graduate work. Also, look to leaders in the field who inspire you, whether they be professors, researchers, or authors.