

Meet Our ACSM Past Presidents



David Lamb, Ph.D., FACSM
ACSM President 1980-81



Name: David Lamb

Education: B.A., Mathematics and Physical Education, University of Northern Iowa; M.A. and Ph.D., Physical Education/Exercise Physiology, Michigan State University

Current or most recent affiliation: Emeritus Professor of Exercise Physiology, The Ohio State University

Honors & Awards:

- 1993** Citation Award, ACSM
- 1996** Excellence in Education Award, Gatorade Sports Science Institute
- 2002** Professional Achievement Award, Michigan State University Department of Kinesiology
- 2007** Hall of Excellence, University of Northern Iowa School of Health, Physical Education and Leisure Services
- 2011** Founders' Award, ACSM Midwest Regional Chapter

Professional Interests: Maintaining contacts from academic and ACSM colleagues and former students.

ACSM Service: President, ACSM Midwest Chapter, 1973-1974; ACSM Board of Trustees, 1974-1984; ACSM Vice President (Physiology), 1976-1977; ACSM Vice President (Basic & Applied Science), 1977-1978; ACSM President, 1980-1981; ACSM Treasurer, 1986-1990

Questions to answer *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?*

From an early age, I aspired to be a good athlete. I never achieved that goal, but I was always curious about how I could improve my performance and read all the coaches' magazines I could get my hands on. I respected almost every one of my high school coaches and decided I would like to follow their career paths. I enrolled at the University of Northern Iowa, was a good student, and the director of athletics encouraged me to go to graduate school.

At Michigan State University, I took a course from Wayne Van Huss, an exercise physiologist who received his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois. He was a charismatic teacher who convinced me—and others—that exercise physiologists could make major contributions to the well-being of people throughout the world. After completing coursework in biochemistry, I became excited about understanding the effects of acute and chronic exercise on carbohydrate metabolism, especially the effect of training on muscle and liver glycogen. But I was not very good at focusing and was also intrigued about the hypertrophic response of skeletal muscle to exercise training, thermoregulation during exercise, and so on.

As a student, who were your mentors and what role did they play in your professional development?

Wayne Van Huss and Bill Heusner were my graduate advisors at Michigan State. Both fostered my interest in exercise physiology and mentored my research efforts.

As a professional, was there anyone who was also instrumental in your career development?

Steven Horvath at the Institute of Environmental Stress at the University of California, Santa Barbara taught me the importance of explaining exercise effects, not simply describing them, when conducting research projects.

Charles Tipton was most instrumental in advancing my career, first by encouraging me to apply for ACSM Fellowship, by showing respect for and encouraging me to pursue my ideas for research, and by engaging in spirited arguments with me at meetings of the ACSM Board of Trustees. (He usually won!)

Are there any students who you have mentored who have gone on to play a significant role within ACSM?

Mark Davis, Sue Bloomfield, Larry Durstine, Sean Walsh

What about exercise science / sports medicine still inspires you today?

I continue to engage in the hopeless pursuit of learning how to become more than a mediocre tennis player.

Why and how did you decide to get involved with ACSM? How did your service help you grow as a professional? How do you feel you were able to get elected to its highest position?

I attended my first ACSM annual meeting in 1966 at the University of Wisconsin. As I recall, all presentations were conducted in a single auditorium. I met many new and delightful colleagues there and was intrigued by much of the research presented. A few years later I attended a meeting of the nascent Midwest Chapter of ACSM. For some reason, I was asked to become president, and for some other reason I agreed to do it.

My involvement in ACSM exposed me to new and exciting research ideas and to some great professionals. I thoroughly enjoyed my interactions with ACSM colleagues, who were serious, and in many cases world-class scientists, but they were self-deprecating and lots of fun to be around.

Why did people vote for me as ACSM president? I think I gained a reputation as someone willing to take on tasks in ACSM and complete them expeditiously. But maybe some ACSM members voted for me because I was tall?

What are your most memorable moments from your service to ACSM?

1. Early in 1980 I traveled to St. Petersburg as a member of an ACSM delegation to participate in a symposium on anabolic steroids in sport. Upon my return to the U.S., I became so sick I could not get out of bed, but I was supposed to be in charge of my first ACSM Board meeting as the new president. I had to call Henry Miller, the vice president, and ask him to take over for me. He did not let me down. Not a very auspicious beginning for my presidential term.
2. The ACSM Annual Meeting in 1980 was held in Las Vegas. This was at the time when the Peoples' Republic of China was just opening up, and ACSM had invited a small contingent of Chinese scientists and political leaders to attend the annual meeting. As president, I was tasked with welcoming the delegation. As I witnessed them strolling the streets of Las Vegas and being approached by scantily-clad women, I wondered how they must imagine the depravity of all American cities.
3. In May of 1981 at the ACSM Annual Meeting in Miami, one of my duties as the outgoing president was to host a reception for international members in the presidential suite of the hotel where my family was staying. The reception – on one of the final days of the meeting – was planned to begin about 9:00 p.m., and near midnight most of the guests had trickled out of the suite. Being totally exhausted by all of the activities during the week, I was looking forward to a decent night's sleep. But suddenly, about 30-40 members from Brazil and Argentina entered the suite ready to party. They stayed until about 2:00 a.m. I may have slept that night in my suit and tie!

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4. In November of 1981, Howard (Skip) Knuttgen and I were invited to China to give lectures. It is hard to imagine now, but as we flew into Beijing at night and looked out the airplane windows, we could see only a half-dozen lighted streets. This was only about 40 years ago. Everyone wore dark blue "Mao jackets," most transportation was by bicycle or horse-drawn carts, and the locals were overwhelmed when they saw us take their photos with Polaroid cameras. The economic strides China has made since then have been truly remarkable. There was an initial small meeting of a dozen or so scientists designed to have Skip and me outline the main concepts we would be presenting at larger meetings. Skip would be presenting a tutorial on the terminology used to describe movements during exercise. Everything went smoothly until he described eccentric movements such as lowering a dumbbell as "lengthening contractions." That concept took quite a while to get sorted out. One of our first lectures took place in a large unheated gymnasium before 300 invited representatives from each of the Chinese provinces. I wore a sweater, an overcoat and gloves as our translator struggled with my English, sentence by sentence. I decided that if I could get through that experience, I could give a lecture under any imaginable circumstance.
5. Of course, my fondest memory was when I was presented with the ACSM Citation Award. What an amazing honor!

How did you become a Fellow and in what year? How do you feel that played a role in your development as a professional?

In about 1971 Charles Tipton encouraged me to apply, and it had a tremendous impact on my career.

What were some of the main issues confronting ACSM at the time of your presidency?

The major issue was where to locate the ACSM national office. We had visited many cities and considered several proposals before I was fortunate enough to help solicit a major offer from the city of Indianapolis. I believe this was my major contribution to ACSM.

What do you think are your most meaningful contributions to the field of exercise science / sports medicine?

My exercise physiology textbook and my chairmanship of the Gatorade Sports Science Institute for 19 years were presumably sound contributions.

What advice would you have for future leaders of ACSM?

Do your best, and don't muck it up.

What advice would you give to students who are looking to pursue a career in exercise science / sports medicine?

Follow your dreams