

# News from the Society

## Members in the News

Boston trial attorney **Thomas E. Cargill, Jr.**, has been elected President of the Roscoe Pound-American Trial Lawyers Foundation of Washington, D.C., a national legal research and educational charitable foundation charged with perpetuating the administration of justice in the public interest. Mr. Cargill is a member of the Society's governing Council.

Former U.S. Representative **Paul D. Rogers**, an honorary life time member of the Society, is helping to launch a new health effort — the National Coalition for Disease Prevention and Environmental Health. Stressing that the recent overemphasis on cost control has been an obstacle to improving the nation's health, the new group will attempt to promote the gathering of information concerning the great savings to the nation from health benefits and advances themselves.

## Annual Rattigan Essay Competition Winners

The 1978 John P. Rattigan, M.D., Student Essay Competition has been concluded. This year this annually sponsored Society program drew law review or thesis style papers on topics ranging from the legal or ethical validity of human experimentation to proposals for federal regulation of scientific knowledge, and recombinant DNA technology in particular, to the rights of future generations. The winners are to be congratulated. They are:

First Prize:  
(cash award \$300)

**George A. Zelcs**  
*The Right to Treatment for all Civilly Committed Mental Patients*  
J.D. Candidate, 1979  
Chicago, Illinois

Second Prize:  
(cash award \$150)

**Richard B. Rabens, M.D.**  
*New Dog-Old Tricks: Legal Considerations of Medical Screening Programs*  
M.P.H. Candidate, 1978, University of California  
Berkeley, California

2 *Medicolegal News*

Third Prize:  
(cash award \$100)

**Norman Zimmerman**  
*The Need for the Structuring of Proposed Federal Regulations to Reflect the Current State of Scientific Knowledge*  
J.D. Candidate, 1980, American University  
Washington, D.C.

The judges of this year's contest included: George J. Annas, J.D., M.P.H., Judy Lesser, J.D., Jim McMahon, J.D., John A. Norris, J.D., M.B.A., and Stephen Weiner, J.D. Society members who are interested in serving as a Rattigan Competition judge/evaluator should contact the Executive Director of the Society.

### 1979 Contest Announced

The fifth annual Rattigan Competition, like its predecessors, will seek to encourage graduate students to prepare manuscripts on subjects dealing with the many medicolegal issues and problems confronting health care professionals and consumers today. The contest is open to all students enrolled in schools of law, medicine, hospital administration, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, nursing, social work, or public health.

The deadline for submitting manuscripts to the 1979 contest is October 15, 1979.

For 1979, the following awards will be available for presentation to those student authors whose papers are deemed worthy of such recognition by the panel of judges: First Prize (\$300); Second Prize (\$150); Third Prize (\$100); and Honorable Mention (no cash award).

Contributors or those desiring information on the competition should write to:

John P. Rattigan, M.D., Competition  
American Society of Law & Medicine  
454 Brookline Avenue  
Boston, MA 02215

### Contributions Solicited

Contributions to the John P. Rattigan, M.D., Fund are necessary to continue this annual essay competition and other programs of continuing medicolegal education at the graduate school level. All donations are tax-deductible and should be sent to:

Executive Director  
American Society of Law & Medicine  
454 Brookline Avenue  
Boston, MA 02215

## Letters-to-the-Editors

To the Editor:

In volume 5, number 3 of *MEDICOLEGAL NEWS*, at page 3, George J. Annas used the parenthetical phrase, "a generally uncontroversial indication," referring to neurosurgical operations for chronic pain. As a result of development of new concepts of pain rehabilitation, virtually all forms of neurosurgical operations for chronic pain of non-cancerous origin are highly controversial.

In March 1976, the University of Washington School of Medicine and the Washington State Medical Association were among the co-sponsors of a well-attended symposium entitled, *Surgery for Industrial Chronic Low Back Pain: Is it Obsolete?* I was the moderator and subsequently reported to my bosses that the answer was: *almost completely*.

At the recent Second World Congress on Pain, in Montreal, a similar trend was evident: the only paper on cingulotomy was from Japan, with a total of seven patients with chronic benign pain said to have enjoyed "some benefits."

Extensive contributions to the literature on newer concepts of pain rehabilitation have come into existence and much of it deals with or stems from the lack of success of neurosurgical surgery for chronic back and neck pain. One especially clear-cut example is: Brena, Steven F., *Pain: What is New?*, *SOUTHERN MEDICINE*, October 1975, pp. 27-33.

Neither our program nor that of this state's workers' compensation agency will fund such surgery because of its demonstrated counterproductivity. I suggest that Mr. Annas and your editorial staff take another look at this controversial situation.

Sincerely yours,  
William R. Halliday, M.D.  
Medical Director  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Olympia, WA

**Editor's Note:** *MEDICOLEGAL NEWS* thanks Dr. Halliday for his letter. Apparently there are no "generally uncontroversial indications" for psychosurgery.

GJA