

In 1961 OSPA decided to establish an award that would recognize the contributions of retiring members. The award, called the Honorary Life Membership Award, was to be presented to individuals who had contributed significantly to the field of school psychology and who continued to demonstrate an interest in the profession. The award is not given every year: since 1961 OSPA has presented the award to 44 individuals. In 1998 the OSPA Executive Board voted to rename the award the R.A. Horn Honorary Life Membership Award in honor of the man who greatly affected the development and direction of school psychology in Ohio.

Today OSPA has chosen to present this award to a man who may have the most recognizable name in modern school psychology – not only in Ohio but far beyond the boundaries of Ohio. He was a practitioner for eighteen years and has been a university faculty member for fourteen years. He was president of OSPA in 1979 and 1993 and president of NASP in 1986 and 1998. He was the primary editor of *Best Practices in School Psychology* Volumes I through IV. He has been a major influence on the state, national, and international level – but he has also somehow cared enough at the individual level to find the time to make calls and write notes of encouragement and congratulations.

I am sure many, if not most, of you have realized I am talking about Alex Thomas. Alex has worked consistently for the good of the profession and the development of school psychologists – all with the goal of serving children and their families. Alex has always been there encouraging new psychologists to become involved in their profession, encouraging old psychologists to welcome the new psychologists, sharing his ideas on how we can promote our profession and our expertise within our communities, and challenging all of us to go that extra mile for the sake of children. Alex has never hesitated to share his knowledge or skills – he has always promoted the profession, not himself. But I believe the most striking characteristic of Alex is that he has done all of this with a great sense of fun. He has forced us to not take ourselves too seriously - to look at ourselves and what we do – to find the humor in children, colleagues and ourselves - and laugh.

OSPA is seeking to pay honor to a person who has done more for our profession and how we practice it than we may ever realize – in the nomination letter he was described as the “superlative professional” and “most significant professional father-figure” - and even though he is retiring, we hope he will keep calling on us to live up to our potential for a very long time. Please join OSPA in paying tribute to Alex Thomas.