



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Gail M. Whitelaw, PhD, Chair
 Angela S. Pond, AuD, First Chair
 Mindy Brudereck, AuD
 John A. Coverstone, AuD
 Barbara L. Kurman, AuD
 Kerry Ormson, EdD, AuD
 Yvonne S. Sininger, PhD

Past Chair Ex Officio Member

Antony R. Joseph, AuD, PhD

Public Representative

Patty A. Keffer, MBA

American Academy of Audiology Board of Directors Liaison

David Zapala, PhD

Managing Director Ex Officio Member

Torryn P. Brazell, CMP, CAE

For ABA information, contact:

American Board of Audiology
 11730 Plaza America Drive
 Suite 300
 Reston, VA 20190
 800-881-5410
aba@audiology.org

Susan Dreith, AuD, Becomes First ABA Certificant to Earn All Three Designations

By Torryn P. Brazell

Susan, you are the first audiologist to hold all three of ABA's designations: Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification, Cochlear Implant Specialty Certification, and Board Certification. This is quite a feat. What motivated you to earn all three designations?

I initially obtained my Board Certification from ABA when I applied to take the Cochlear Implant Specialty Certification exam in 2007. I wanted to obtain this specialty designation as one way of promoting the excellence of the cochlear implant program at our facility. When I became aware of the specialty certification in pediatrics, I was immediately motivated to earn the certification. Having worked as an audiologist in a pediatric hospital for 20 years, and with the pediatric population in several previous employment settings, I have seen children whose hearing losses have been misdiagnosed, improperly managed, and inadequately supported.

Unfortunately, I have seen some professionals who, albeit well meaning, may not have had the necessary knowledge or experience to accurately identify and provide effective management and support for a hearing-impaired child and his



Susan Dreith, AuD
 Children's Hospital Colorado

or her family. I strongly believe that these children and families deserve to receive audiological services by professionals with special expertise in pediatrics.

Do you plan to advertise your uniqueness in having all three designations? To your patient population? To your referral sources?

Throughout my career, I have been dedicated to developing my expertise in pediatric audiology, (re)

habilitation, and cochlear implants. Obtaining the specialty certifications in those areas was a natural choice. I strive to provide exceptional audiological services in a hospital that is a nationally ranked pediatric hospital serving a multistate region. The hospital's marketing and physician relations department may choose to advertise my designations.

Do you identify all three designations in clinic correspondence?

In some correspondence I will identify all three designations.

I see that you graduated with an AuD, Central Michigan University (CMU), 2008. Why did you choose this academic program? How do you think this academic program may have provided motivation to earn three designations?

I earned my master's degree in audiology in 1978 from the University of Wyoming. I have worked as an audiologist in a variety of settings, primarily serving the pediatric population. I became the manager of audiology services at Children's Hospital Colorado in 1998 after seven years of employment as an audiologist at the hospital.

When the entry-level degree in audiology was transitioning from the master's to the AuD, I was motivated to obtain my AuD because I felt it was the appropriate professional next step for my role as a manager and supervisor of new graduates with the AuD. I also wanted to expand my education while continuing to work full time.

I chose the CMU distance learning program because I felt it was a challenging program with academic requirements and expectations that were most commensurate with a doctoral-level degree. I thoroughly enjoyed the coursework and gained a great deal, professionally, from earning the degree.



How can I make myself more marketable and profitable?

The **ABA Certification program** identifies and recognizes audiologists and audiology students whose knowledge base and ethical practices are consistent with professionally established standards and who continue to enhance their professional knowledge through continuing education.

- ABA Certification enhances your career.
- Specialty Certification in Cochlear Implants is available.
- Specialty Certification in Pediatric Audiology is available.
- Provisional Certification for students is FREE.

To learn more about ABA certifications, visit www.americanboardofaudiology.org.



My motivation to earn the ABA designations stems from my personal and professional goals of providing high-quality, pediatric family-centered care, and representing one of the top 10 children's hospitals in the nation.

What made you decide to become an audiologist? How many years have you worked as an audiologist?

When I first started college, I was a fairly typical college student, declaring a couple of different majors in the first two years. I wanted to work in a career where I could teach or serve children. Realizing that my first career choices simply were not for me, I became interested in deaf and blind education (not knowing the field of audiology existed). I discovered the audiology program at the university I was attending and, after taking several undergraduate courses in audiology and communication disorders, I was excited to declare audiology as my major.

I graduated with a bachelor's of science degree in audiology and received a graduate assistantship for coursework and training in audiology and aural (re)habilitation at the University of Wyoming. My graduate training provided me with the focus I desired, providing comprehensive, family-centered services for deaf/hard-of-hearing children. I have worked in audiology for over 30 years and have enjoyed my career immensely.

Have you received any recognition from your employer for receiving your designations?

I have received congratulations from my colleagues within the department as well as the department chair and

director. Honestly, I was just recently notified that I am the only person to hold all three designations! I am honored and proud to be recognized for this distinction.

Last question, Susan. How do you envision the profession of audiology unfolding over the next decade?

The field of audiology has broadened so much over the decades. Research

My goal is to eventually require the pediatric specialty certification as a condition for employment at our facility.

What have these certifications done for you personally and professionally? How have you benefited, and how do they benefit your patient population?

I am proud of the level of expertise I have developed in the areas of pediatrics and cochlear implants over the course of my career. It has been a privilege to have Deborah Hayes, PhD, as my mentor and colleague for the past 20 years. I hold very high standards for patient and family care; families who seek services at one of the top 10 pediatric hospitals expect to receive expert pediatric medical care from all professionals. It is my hope and desire that families will recognize that their child's audiology care is provided by audiologists who hold specialty certification in pediatrics (or cochlear implants). I am encouraging and supporting the audiologists at our hospital to obtain the ABA pediatric specialty certification over the next year. My goal is to eventually require the pediatric specialty certification as a condition for employment at our facility.

and technological advances have increased our knowledge of hearing and hearing disorders and our ability to more accurately diagnose auditory disorders. Audiologists have gained a greater understanding of the implications of hearing disorders and have developed more effective treatments. I truly believe that the significant scope of practice within our field necessitates newly trained audiologists to discover their passion(s) within the field and develop expertise in specialty areas. While specialty certifications in pediatrics and cochlear implants are fairly new to the field of audiology, I anticipate professional opportunities may become available in the future to obtain specialty certifications in other subspecialty areas of our field. ¹⁰

Torryn P. Brazell, CMP, CAE, is the managing director of the ABA.