

Applied Social Psychology Program at Loyola University Chicago  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, April 20, 2024

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I want to tell you my version of the origin of our graduate program. Please bear with me as this goes back a long way.

During the 1960s, the United States was in turmoil: the assassinations of national leaders, the Vietnam war and protests against it, the continuation of social problems of poverty, crime, discrimination, health care, education, and others. At the same time, there was a crisis within the field of social psychology proclaimed by those who argued that it was not relevant to these social problems, that it consisted mainly of testing theories in laboratories, while it should be investigating the causes and possible solutions to social problems in the real world.

In the late 1960s, there was a doctoral program in social psychology at Loyola. The faculty were Homer Johnson, Emil Posavac, and Patrick Laughlin. In 1970 Patrick Laughlin left Loyola, and Marilyn Brewer from Northwestern and I from Ohio State were hired. Marilyn departed after one year. That left Homer, Emil, and I as the social area faculty, and there were about four grad students. For a while, it was business as usual, basic theory testing research in classrooms with college students. However, we realized that our program was small and did not have a particular focus.

We needed to grow and to have a unique identity. Concerned by the turmoil in society, the crisis of relevance in our field, and the concentration of social problems in Chicago, we decided to focus on applications of social psychology in the real world. We obtained permission to hire someone to be the leader of this new program.

Who would be a good person to lead our program into unknown territory? We were impressed by the 1971 book, "Beyond the

Laboratory,” edited by Leonard Bickman and Thomas Henchy

Since then, other benchmarks of an identifiable profession have been established such as numerous textbooks about applied social psychology, the development of graduate programs at other universities, and the emergence of publications such as the Journal of Basic and Applied Social Psychology, and the Applied Social Psychology Annual that Len started at Loyola in 1980 and that continued in the 1990s as a series of volumes, Social Psychological Applications to Social Issues, edited by the Loyola faculty with the assistance of our program's students.

Another aspect of professionalization is having a professional identity. If you are a lawyer, or a medical doctor, everyone knows what those professions are. But our students often reported difficulty explaining to potential employers, and their family and friends, just what is an applied social psychologist. I have always been concerned that our students attain that professional identity while in our program and retain it after they graduated and went off to their diverse careers whether in non-

