

Michelle Riba, M.D., M.S., 131st President, 2004–2005

John F. Greden, M.D.

I have the distinct honor of introducing Dr. Michelle Riba, President of our esteemed American Psychiatric Association.

I will begin her introduction with a story. I first met Michelle in 1993 when we recruited her for a position at the University of Michigan. As the interview closed, I looked at her and asked, “How long do you suppose it will take before you become President of the American Psychiatric Association?” Despite preconceived stereotypes among some in our society about psychiatrists, I had no crystal ball. Michelle simply radiated leadership 12 years ago even as she does now. A few selected examples illustrate her wide-ranging skill sets.

First, Michelle is a world leader in education. Teaching appears to be in her genes. Indeed, before becoming a psychiatrist, she taught high school chemistry and biology. At the University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry, she served first as our Director of Residency Education and later as Associate Chair for Education and Academic Affairs. She has received APA's Nancy Roeske award for excellence in medical student education *twice* and served as President of both the American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training and the Association for Academic Psychiatry. When the Institute of Medicine compiled a team to help remedy the severe shortage of academic psychiatry clinical investigators, Michelle was appropriately asked to be a member of that elite group. As APA President, she has played a key role in the National Psychiatry Training Council, which the National Institute of Mental Health established to implement the Institute of Medicine guidelines. I have the privilege to co-chair that group, a collection of ALL key players in the field, and as a side commentary, it is my hope that all members of our profession will recognize and support this vitally important effort to create a new generation of academic psychiatrists.

In clinical domains, Michelle excels in consultation-liaison psychiatry. Some teach and talk collaboration; Michelle exemplifies it. At Michigan, she led the development of the PsychOncology Program and serves as its

Director. The Ford Motor Company awarded her the “Partners in Health Award”—the Cancer Center's highest annual honor—for this program.

I recently asked Dr. Riba to assume a new position as Associate Chair for Integrated and Collaborative Services in our department. This new position requires her to lead, develop, organize, integrate, and manage new opportunities for clinical, educational, and research collaborations among our Department of Psychiatry and the Depression Center, on the one hand, and other Centers of Excellence within our health system, on the other. Without such bridge building, it is my belief that psychiatry will not succeed in forging and solidifying the partnerships that enable our most promising tremendous scientific advances to be translated into the mainstream clinical delivery in our nation's complex health system.

Academically, Dr. Riba is a prolific, practical, and powerful voice. She has over 100 peer-reviewed articles, chapters, and abstracts and has edited or co-edited more than 25 books. She is an administrative legend. She prioritizes, organizes, and accomplishes, quietly juggling multiple projects without ever appearing to be multitasking, and is not afraid to dream. She also is not afraid to take positions that firmly defend values of importance to our patients and families and that emphasize the role of psychiatrists in their care. For example, she recently launched a task force on college mental health, emphasizing the essential participation of psychiatrists in the delivery of care for our student populations.

Finally, Michelle is a wonderfully balanced individual: a dedicated daughter, a remarkable spouse to Artie, and a devoted Mom for Elisa and Erica. In essence, she does it all. The American Psychiatric Association has been privileged to be led by this President, Dr. Michelle Riba.

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