

Featured Member: Sarah Deaver, 2017 Recipient of Honorary Lifetime Member Award

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Sarah Deaver, PhD, ATR-BC, was awarded the 2017 Honorary Lifetime Member (HLM) award, the highest honor bestowed by the AATA. Nominees are considered based on contributions across three broad categories: (1) Breadth of influence upon the entire field of art therapy; (2) Enduring effect upon the entire field of art therapy; and (3) Importance of contributions as evaluated from an interdisciplinary viewpoint. Dr. Deaver has contributed extensively on each of the above and has earned tremendous respect in the field of art therapy for her influential work and leadership.

Dr. Deaver is an exemplary member of the Association with a long history of dedication to the profession through service, scholarship, and education. She has served the profession through significant leadership roles over many years including: President of the AATA (2013-15), board member (2009-15), a director on the Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB) (2003-06), and as a member and chair of several AATA committees. Dr. Deaver holds a BS in Art (Skidmore College), a Certificate in Psychiatric Art Therapy (Eastern Virginia Medical School [EVMS]), an MS in Art Therapy (EVMS), an MS Ed in Counseling (Old Dominion University [ODU]), and a PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision (ODU). She has also authored numerous publications including 21 articles in peer-reviewed journals (nine as primary author) and seven book chapters.

Dr. Deaver's colleagues provided multiple testimonies to establish her as the 2017 award recipient. One colleague who has known her for 25 years says, "Rarely have I seen anyone who comes close to Sarah in so generously giving of her time and energy to help our profession's collective cause." She is particularly impressed by Dr. Deaver's ability to solve problems creatively on behalf of the profession and cites her "agility in confronting complex problems, willingness to explore a range of possible perspectives, ability to engage in the many 'what if's' that generate and synthesize divergent ideas, and ability to recognize potential connections and relations among disparate, sometimes conflicted situations."

Another colleague reflects, "In her decades of service as an educator, Dr. Deaver has instructed hundreds of art therapists and mentored them in their early careers—I am one who is grateful for her mentorship." She adds, "[Dr. Deaver] has helped shape the direction of the field."

Deaver was appointed to the faculty of EVMS in 1981. She served as the Research Director of the Graduate Art Therapy and Counseling Program, the EVMS IRB, and the Department of

Psychiatry Research Advisory Committee, and mentored dozens of students in their thesis research. Her research foci include art therapy assessment methods, art therapy graduate education outcomes, and, most recently, the efficacy of art therapy for military service members.

Furthermore, she is revered by her students. One former student shares that: “She truly believes in paying forward her incredible knowledge and experience to the future of the Art Therapy field. We benefited from Sarah’s teaching in ways we continue to draw upon in our work today.”

Deaver is presently co-authoring a text book designed for teaching research in graduate art therapy programs. She also continues to mentor former students from EVMS to support their research and publication pursuits. She was proud to have represented the AATA at the Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network Clinical Research Summit in September 2017.

Sarah Deaver is a well-known and respected name in art therapy research. In addition to contributing through scholarship, Dr. Deaver has been influential in her leadership. As a Director on the AATA Board of Directors, she was instrumental in moving the AATA Journal from an in-house publication to Routledge/Taylor & Francis, thereby vastly increasing national and international visibility of art therapy research and scholarship. Other leadership positions include: member and Chair of the Research Committee, originator and facilitator of the Research Roundtable at the Association’s annual conferences, and member of the National Demonstration Project Committee.

Dr. Deaver is an equally accomplished and dedicated clinician. She has been a practicing art therapist since 1976 and has worked in a variety of settings including inpatient and outpatient psychiatric centers, schools, and a youth residential center. She will additionally soon be taking on a position as an art therapist clinician in private practice in Norfolk, VA.

The AATA greatly appreciates Dr. Deaver’s continued contributions to the field and to the Association and was proud to announce her as HLM during the [awards ceremony](#) at AATA’s 2017 conference. Each year, the AATA honors members who have shown exemplary service to the organization and the field. We invite you to recognize your colleagues this year when the 2018 Honors Awards applications become available.

