

Foreword

It is interesting to review the historical perspective of the first women in the field of Forensic Document Examination, as detailed in the article by Forensic Document Examiner (FDE) Jan Beck. These pioneering women entered the profession at a time when society, particularly the role of women, was undergoing change. Then as now, the training process followed the accepted practice of apprenticing with established and well-regarded document examiners. As early as 1913, these individuals helped establish a program for the interchange of ideas and research information. The organization of the group known as the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners was established in 1942, with Albert S. Osborn serving as the first president. The first woman president of the ASQDE was Lucile P. Lacy in 1968. At that time, Mary Beacom was the only other member.

The Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory at Northwestern University's School of Law was the first Crime Laboratory. In 1938, this became the Crime Laboratory at the Chicago Police Department. Since that time, Crime Laboratory examiners have provided valuable analysis of evidence and testimony in courts of law. Today, the accreditation of Crime Laboratories by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors / Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD / LAB) assesses the management, quality assurance and training of crime laboratory personnel.

With the many challenges facing the profession, the proper training and certification of FDEs is more critical than ever before. Established in 1977 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners (ABFDE) is the recognized certifying organization for FDEs within the United States and Canada. In *United States v. Buck*, 1987 WL 19300 (U.S. Dist. Ct. S.D. N.Y.), the court recognized the existence of the ABFDE as a certifying body for FDEs. By referring to the ABFDE, the court was satisfied "that professional scientific knowledge in the subject area exists and is sufficiently reliable to be of assistance to the jury."

The stringent requirements for ABFDE certification attest to the high level of training and com-

petency possessed by those certified. These requirements include the proof that an individual completed a baccalaureate degree, successfully finished a full-time training program in a recognized document laboratory and worked an additional two years conducting independent document examinations. Further, the applicant must provide references from three FDEs in addition to completing the requirements for participation in professional activities and passing the ABFDE's formal examination process prior to receiving certification.

A historical review of the founding FDEs describes participation in scientific professional meetings, the publication of research in peer-reviewed journals, and an intensive program of study. These are also the requirements for today's FDEs and FDE trainees. The long-standing tradition of education, apprenticeship, training, certification and ongoing professional involvement continues to produce the qualified forensic scientists needed to serve as expert witnesses in courts of law.

Finally, we sincerely apologize for the unfortunate delay in publishing this issue of the *Journal of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners*. A number of unforeseen circumstances that contributed to the postponement of this issue (and the next) have been addressed and corrected. We are working to streamline the preparation and publishing of the Journal and are confident that future issues will be more timely, especially in view of the fact that the typesetting duties are now the responsibility of our Executive Assistant, Nanette A. Davis.

We are also pleased to welcome Jerry L. Brown as the new Assistant Editor and James J. Horan to our Editorial Board. We are encouraged by the many subscription requests received at the ASQDE office, and hope you will continue to support this Journal. A form for subscription renewal and purchase is attached at the back of this issue. As always, your comments regarding the *Journal of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners* are welcomed and appreciated.

Janis M. Winchester
Editor