



# From the President

**Our 2021 APAI conference in Arlington, Texas was a tremendous success.** With the help of Ashley, a tremendous host committee and solid programming options from the Professional Development Committee, we were able to make lemonade out of lemons. Over 100 in-person attendees and nearly double that number virtually ensured a training benefit available for our membership.

However herein exists the conundrum going forward; do you offer the virtual option? Are in-person get-togethers being relegated to the trash bin of history like black and white televisions and corded phones? While no one can argue with the convenience, cost effectiveness of not budgeting money for travel, lodging or meals, and the ease of watching the sessions, how much is really missed with not being on site with your fellow practitioners? Let's take a look at the pros and cons of a virtual versus in-person conference. Many of these concepts were discussed in the Devolutions blog I enjoy reading on a regular basis.

Pros of virtual – cheaper, no weather or health concerns, convenient, a global reach for people who otherwise could not attend and total participation. Studies have shown people are 30% more likely to speak in a virtual Q&A format than in a live program session.

Cons of virtual – No off-line interaction, distractions from being off-site (can you say telework?), multiple time zones precluding everyone being on-line simultaneously, and the dreaded technical issues which virtual users can't control and could wind up losing the desired programming they had requested.

On the other side of the coin, COVID has allowed us to take a fresh view of our traditional conference setup. Drawbacks that had either not been contemplated or discovered previously include budgets which are ever more strained for country, state and local jurisdictions, time consuming planning and transportation issues, as well as long periods away from the workplace, the stress on conference planning coordinators to have everything running smoothly and timely and the inevitable long hauls back home with the hassles associated with it. However, can these problem areas be offset by invaluable networking with colleagues, interacting with vendors who offer state of the art tools to help us do our jobs more effectively, the back and forth discussion and debate which is not suitable for a virtual format, and the wonderful goody bag which is full of fun and useful gadgets and information which often highlights the locales special characteristics? As you can see, there are a litany of points on both sides of the aisle.

I for one am an in-person guy. Call me old fashioned but the ability to be there allows a level of participation not possible via the computer. Intimacy is not replaceable. While a virtual format can supplement an in-person event, nothing in my opinion, can compete with "being there."

David Blumberg  
APAI President

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## TO-DO IN 2021

- RENEW APAI MEMBERSHIP
- SERVE ON APAI COMMITTEE
- URGE FELLOWS TO JOIN APAI
- MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE 2022 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE IN SAN DIEGO MAY 1 – MAY 4, 2022

## MEMBERSHIP FEES\*

<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	\$65
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL</b>	
(UP TO 8 MEMBERS)	\$375
(9 TO 13 MEMBERS)	\$475
(14 TO 20 MEMBERS)	\$575
<b>ALUMNI</b>	\$40
<b>ASSOCIATE</b>	\$40
<b>STUDENT</b>	\$15

\*Fees are on a per year basis.

# Member Spotlight

Ladeidra N. Jones, Chair, Kentucky Parole Board

by: Ashley Koonce, Executive Director, APAI



Ladeidra N. Jones

**Ladeidra N. Jones has 15+ years of experience working with Justice Involved Individuals in roles within correctional facilities, community supervision, clinical treatment and alternative sentencing programs.** She began her career working at the Woodford County Detention Center in Versailles, KY. She later worked as a Probation and Parole Officer in Lexington, KY (District 9.) There she supervised a caseload of clients and wrote Pre-Sentence Investigation reports. Ladeidra also has years of clinical experience in the field of substance abuse treatment and recovery working at Fayette County Drug Court and later the Kentucky Department of Corrections Division of Substance Abuse. Ms. Jones received a BA in Criminal Justice from Kentucky State University and an MBA from Midway University. She received her initial temporary certification in alcohol and drug counseling in 2015. Ladeidra N. Jones was appointed to the Parole Board on January 17, 2019 and subsequently appointed as Chair on June 21, 2021.

Ladeidra has been a member of APAI since her appointment to the board in 2019. Throughout her career, she has been successful in working with Justice Involved Individuals of all backgrounds and cultures. One of her passions is helping colleagues understand the importance of recognizing cultural differences and subsequent biases AND how those differences/biases can create barriers to successful reintegration for the client. She provides training to the Kentucky Department of Corrections Probation and Parole Basic Academy on how to navigate Cultural Bias in the correctional setting.

Ladeidra recently completed a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Certificate Program through the University of South Florida-Muma College of Business. She believes that as board members, a better grasp on understanding the clients as a whole will lead to more success in decision-making duties and the continued goal to maintain public safety.

Her number one goal is to increase training and educational opportunities for the Kentucky board members. Secondly, she would like to work towards increasing the parole rate for non-violent, low level offense cases. Her overall vision for the field is to become more transparent amongst stakeholders in order to increase our opportunities of providing a continuum of services for the those released individuals.

**Join APAI Again in 2022!**

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[www.apaintl.org](http://www.apaintl.org)

# Parole Board for England & Wales

12 Month Update - Written February 2021, published July 2021

by: Martin Jones, International Regional Vice-President, APAI

**The last 12 months have been an extremely challenging period for everyone.** As such, I thought it would be appropriate to provide an update on the work of the Parole Board for England and Wales during that time and some significant changes to the system which we expect to happen later this year.

Every parole jurisdiction is a little different, in terms of the nature of the cases we deal with and how we conduct our business. In England and Wales, our primary focus is on those who have committed the most serious offences, and the majority of cases in which release is a possibility are decided through a full oral hearing in a prison.

As with many other jurisdictions, the fast spread of COVID-19 meant that all hearings in prison were paused in the Spring of 2020 to ensure the safety of all participants and we made a commitment to progress hearings via telephone or video but we probably anticipated our progression of cases would be impacted.

One year on, and the Board has made almost 25,000 decisions and held nearly 10,000 remote oral hearings since March of 2020, which is more than the entire previous year. By accelerating our decision making, over 4,000 prisoners have been judged as safe to be released; without a significant swing in our release rate (which is up very slightly). The number of cases awaiting a hearing date is down significantly on pre-Covid levels and the number awaiting an initial paper assessment is also down.

We are really glad to say there is no systemic backlog despite the huge challenges faced by us all. Our successful roll out of remote hearings since March last year are effectively limiting delays across the parole system and where an oral parole hearing is needed. 99% of the hearings that have taken place over the last year have taken place remotely by video or telephone link, however there have been a very small numbers of cases needing parole panel

members or other attendees to attend the prison in person. Some of those hearings have now taken place with safeguards, whilst many others are expected to conclude by the summer. We expect to build the lessons learned from this difficult period into our future way of conducting parole business.

Apart from managing the day-to-day business of the Board, there remains strong public and media interest in our work, and a need to improve public understanding. Our work used to be conducted entirely in private, but increasingly we are shining a light on our processes by providing summaries of our decisions and providing a transparent mechanism for seeking reconsideration of our decisions.

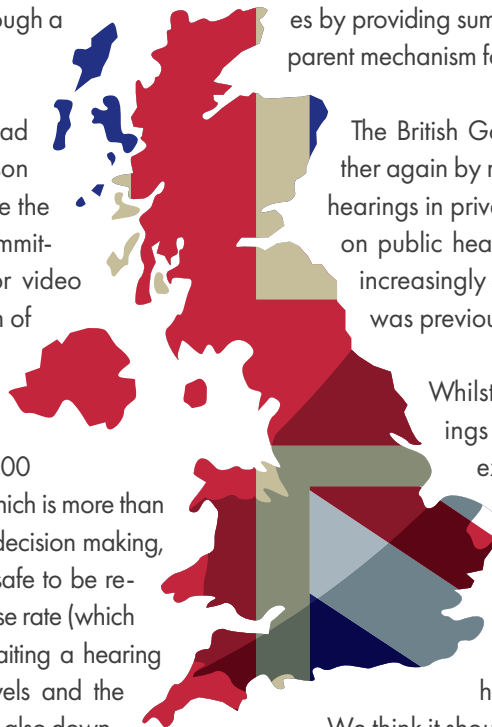
The British Government have announced plans to go further again by relaxing the rules that require us to hold parole hearings in private. The change will end a decades-long ban on public hearings when introduced later this year, as we increasingly shine the light of transparency on a system that was previously secret.

Whilst it is anticipated the vast majority of hearings will continue to be held in private due to the extensive legal, ethical, and victims' issues involved in parole cases; the Board absolutely welcomes any steps to improve openness and transparency around the system and can see a measured, considered, and staged route to making certain hearings open, if it is in the interests of justice.

We think it should be possible to make parole hearings more accessible to victims and members of the press. Ultimately, our aim is to increase transparency of the parole system and ensure a fair and effective hearing for all involved.

The Board must now carefully consider the impact of more open hearings on victims and prisoners in each case and as such is developing a pilot scheme to determine the best possible way of delivering this. However, we do need to take care as we cannot

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allow transparency to cause further harm to victims or set back the progress that a prisoner has made in custody. Provided there are appropriate safeguards so as not to disrupt the process. We also think there is a real opportunity to work with the media to make parole hearings more open to the public and will be working hard to find a way of increasing media access in a way that increases public understanding and transparency.

By shining a light on the system I hope there will be a better un-

derstanding that at its core, the Parole Board's primary objective is public protection and to risk assess the most dangerous offenders in society to decide if it is necessary for the protection of the public that they remain in prison. This means that Parole Board members must examine and closely question prisoners and witnesses at great length when making such critical decisions. Our strong record on public protection demonstrates that to make the best decisions we need to ask difficult questions and for those giving evidence to be as open and honest as possible to inform our decisions.

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## 2021 APAI Conference Overview

Arlington, TX / June 13-16, 2021

by: Ashley Koonce, Executive Director, APAI

**What an incredible conference we had!** Thank you to all who registered, both in-person and virtually! Our partnership with Zoom helped create an online platform that seems to have worked seamlessly as we delivered our first hybrid conference. By hosting the conference in two formats, we were able to reach more participants than ever before, which is outstanding. While there is no experience like being in person, we all understand that during these times, there is a necessity to be available virtually.



from left to right: Jonathan Ogletree, APAI Vice-President;  
Ashley Koonce, APAI Executive Director;  
David Blumberg, APAI President

Altogether we had close to 300 attendees. Six General Sessions. 12 Breakout Workshops. Over 21 hours of learning opportunities. We hope that those of you who were registered have taken

advantage of the first ever opportunity to have access to all the breakout sessions, instead of having to just choose one.

We are beyond thankful for the speakers, exhibitors, and sponsors who helped make this conference such a great success, not only in terms of educational opportunities, but also with our networking time. Coming together for the first time in over two years felt better than we could have imagined.

The Host Committee left our Executive Committee almost speechless. From the smallest of details to some of the largest most important aspects of the conference, they handled it all perfectly. We could not have held this conference with the success that we did, without their partnership. We are beyond grateful for Chairman Gutierrez's commitment to the conference, the association, and the field as a whole. He put together the most incredible dream team who helped run this conference in such a smooth fashion, from planning details over a year ago to the execution until the very last minute!

We are ready for 2022 and cannot wait to make San Diego an unforgettable experience! Our Host Committee and the Professional Development Committee are already underway with their planning for the conference! We expect record attendance (can't wait to see everyone back in person), more educational sessions than before, and of course, excellent networking opportunities for each of our attendees!

JULY 2021

# 2021 Vincent O' Leary Award

Congratulations to Francis Abbott

by: Ashley Koonce, Executive Director, APAI

*This award is to recognize and reward an individual who has made significant contributions to APAI and has demonstrated vision, leadership and commitment to the field of parole. From 1951 to 1957, Vincent O'Leary was Chief of Parole and Probation for the State of Washington. He then served in Texas as Director of Parole Supervision from 1957 until 1962. He became Director of the National Parole Institute in 1963, at which time he assumed responsibility for the first parole board member training, helped develop the first national statistic report on parole, and influenced the development of parole guidelines. He stayed in this position until 1968 and was also Director of Research and Policy for the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. During this time, he was instrumental in developing policy for parole boards in the early days of APAI. In 1968 he was employed as Dean of the School of Criminal Justice for the State University of New York at Albany. He was involved in developing standards for parole boards as a consultant to the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals in 1973. In 1977 he was named President of the New York University at Albany and stayed until he retired in 1990. The hallmark of his career was his tireless fight against the abolishment of parole.*

**Congratulations to Francis Abbott, Executive Director of the Louisiana Board of Pardons & Committee on Parole on being selected as the 2021 recipient of the Vincent O'Leary Award.** Francis has been an integral part of the association's success over the past couple of years. Francis has chaired the Public Relations Committee and helped grow the social media presence and share relevant and informative information with followers and members. Francis was also elected as Secretary during the 2021 Annual Conference in Arlington, TX.

Sheryl Ranatza, Chair of the Louisiana Board of Pardons & Committee on Parole had the following to say about Francis:

"In addition to his contributions to APAI, Francis' contribution to the Louisiana Board of Pardons & Parole is notable. His colleagues say that he is a self-starter, having a high degree of motivation and energy, and is driven

by the importance of his organization's mission.

Francis has the ability to inspire and motivate others, having developed a team of dedicated individuals that he engages to their highest level of performance. He thinks strategically, but implements tactically, seeing the big picture and implementing plans in "bite size morsels" to move the organization forward.

He demonstrates sound judgment with the ability to sift through alternatives, deliberate, and arrive at sound decisions. He demonstrates a passion and respect for the work of paroling authorities and is a credit to our profession."

Francis has a long daily commute from Mississippi to Louisiana but is devoted to his family and somehow manages to balance his work and family life. It was a pleasure to present the award to him with his family in attendance; his wife Jennifer, along with children Coco, Cash, and Celie.



Francis Abbott, Executive Director, Louisiana Board of Pardons & Committee on Parole  
Sheryl Ranatza, Chair, Louisiana Board of Pardons & Committee on Parole

# Renee Collette International Excellence Award

## Congratulations to Sylvie Blanchet

by: Ashley Koonce, Executive Director, APAI

*This award is to recognize and reward an international individual or an organization, which has contributed significantly to the advancement of international criminal justice.*

*Renee Collette served as a member of the Quebec Parole Board for three years and as Chairman for ten years before being appointed as a full-time Board Member and Executive Vice-Chairperson for the Parole Board of Canada. Renee also served as the Acting Executive Director and Acting Chairperson for the Board during her tenure. Her commitment to International Criminal Justice existed throughout her career and reached far beyond the borders of North America. Renee served APAI from its earliest days, in every elected and appointed position that the Association of Paroling Authorities International Constitution embodies. Renee's leadership fostered international growth and advancement throughout the years. Her representation and promotion of the international criminal justice community successfully helped form APAI into the strong international association that it is today. Renee holds numerous awards and recognitions, including the Vincent O'Leary Award, Ben Bear Award, and the President's Award with the Association of Paroling Authorities International, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Commemorative Medal, and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal of recognition.*

Congratulations to Sylvie Blanchet, Executive Vice-Chairperson of the Parole Board of Canada on being selected as the 2021 recipient of the Renee Collette International Excellence Award. Sylvie's dedication to not only the field, but the Association is evident by the expansion of APAI through an incredible network that she has helped continue to grow throughout her time serving as one of the World Region Vice-Presidents.

Below is an excerpt from her nomination:

"[Sylvie] turns down no opportunity to present the work of her organization in both Canada and around the world. She enjoys sharing her knowledge and learning from others. Through her passion and knowledge of community corrections and conditional release, Sylvie has forged important international relationships, not only for the Parole Board, but also for APAI. Sylvie has worked extremely hard to increase the international presence within the

APAI. She, like Renée Collette, understands that the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and best practices furthers the work of the APAI and helps paroling authorities to continually improve.

She values the international relationships she has made. In addition, Sylvie shares the work of the APAI through other venues and organizations that she is involved with, including the Canadian Association of Paroling Authorities, and the American Parole and Probation Association.

In sum, Sylvie shares Ms. Collette's commitment for international growth and advancement in international criminal justice, particularly related to parole and conditional release. She has a strong sense of the importance of partnerships and believes in sharing of information is key to breaking barriers and to ensure safe communities. Sylvie's international work is a tremendous asset to the APAI in realizing their goal to be a global association."



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