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Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice:

Life History of Dr. Donald Walkovich, DHSc, OTR/L, FAOTA

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### **Abstract**

*Objective.* The purpose of this study is to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists (OTs) a view of the history of occupational therapy (OT) practice and how it has evolved from its inception to the current practice.

*Method.* A one hour, semi-structured interview was conducted with Dr. Walkovich and one OT student from the University of North Dakota. The interview was transcribed and the interview data was coded and compared with the history of the OT profession.

*Results.* The predominant categories that emerged during data analysis were his involvement in the profession of OT were Occupational Therapy, Education, Evolution of OT, and Personal Experience. The findings indicate that Dr. Walkovich has impacted the profession of OT from an educational aspect from his involvement at the state and national level.

*Conclusion.* Dr. Walkovich's strong internal motivation and passion for OT has allowed him to significantly impact the field of OT and influence the evolution of OT practice through his involvement at the state and national levels.

### **Introduction**

This life history is one of thirty life history interviews that are part of a larger project, *Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) at the National Level and Beyond*. The Kawa Model (Cole & Tufano, 2008) was used to guide the interview process as Dr. Walkovich's influence on OT practice was explored. The purpose of this study is to provide current and future generations of OTs a view of the history of OT practice and how it has evolved from its inception to the current practice. This was done through the life history stories of OTs who have held leadership roles at the national level and beyond. It is anticipated that the life history process will be a powerful way to gather this information. By utilizing a life history approach, this study focused on Dr. Walkovich's involvement and influence on the evolution of OT practice. Dr. Walkovich is an OT in the state of Pennsylvania where he is currently involved at the state level in the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association (POTA) and the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) for the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

### **Literature Review**

The profession of OT was founded in the year of 1917 in Clifton Springs, New York at the Consolation House with the establishment of the Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy by six individuals (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). This society would later become known as AOTA. The values and beliefs of OT evolved and were formed by the historic events that occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Reed, 2006). Some examples that influenced these beliefs are industrialization, women's rights, wars such as World War I, economic struggles, health care legislation, and technology (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). The development of OT as a profession did not revolve around new technology and scientific

advances but more around knowledge that had already been established by a wide variety of professions. These professions ranged from educators to crafters to health care workers and scientists to religious and political leaders and the clients themselves (Reed, 2006). OT utilized the wide range of knowledge that had already been developed by and researched by these professions, among others, to create the values and beliefs of this unique profession.

Moving forward in time to the late 1970's, OT practice was heavily influenced by medical rehabilitation which was a result of the repercussions of World War II (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). During this time, the profession of OT was making a shift from a holistic, occupation-based, and top-down approach to more of a medical, bottom-up approach which focused more on the underlying source of the problem (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). This means that the profession moved away from its roots in utilizing occupations and crafts therapeutically in practice and started putting more emphasis on the application of theory, research, and more mechanical approaches to interventions. This mechanical approach included an emphasis on the impact that the neuromotor and musculoskeletal systems have on occupational function (Kielhofner, 2009 as cited in Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). Now, the profession is working on making its way back to its roots of occupation and backing up the significant benefits that it can contribute to the health and well-being clients with research articles as evidence.

During the 1980s and 1990s, there were advances made in science, technology, education, and health care which influenced the profession of OT (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). The emphasis in the profession at this time was on research, efficacy, and defining the scope of practice for OTs, especially when it came to defining the distinction between physical therapy (PT) and OT (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). In 1986, the board of directors of AOTA created the American Occupational Therapy Certification Board which is now known as the National Board

for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) (Low as cited in Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments were enacted in 1997 (American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) as cited in Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). This act provided protection, education, and accountability for specialized services, including OT, to be provided and incorporated in order to improve education for children with disabilities in schools (AOTA as cited in Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). This law increased the amount of OTs practicing within school systems, so much so that a majority of OTs were practicing in education and early intervention within the school system after this act was put into place (AOTA as cited in Christiansen & Haertl, 2014).

From the year 2000 to the present, OT reached many milestone, including its 100th year as a profession in 2017. During this time, legislation and policy changes heavily influenced the profession by creating goals to contain costs, increase the quality of practice through measurable outcomes, and providing evidence-based research to demonstrate the efficacy and effectiveness of OT (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). The profession grew globally during this time as well and began to integrate other cultural approaches and perspectives including use of the Kawa Model (Cole & Tufano, 2008), especially within Pacific Asia, South America, and the European Union to encourage a unification of international organizations (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). Currently in OT education, there is a debate within AOTA and state organizations regarding a possible transition from requiring a master's degree to a doctorate degree in order to further prepare graduates to take on professional leadership roles in health care (Case-Smith, Page, Darragh, Rybski, and Clearly, 2014).

The POTA was originally formed in 1921 by a group of students that graduated from the Philadelphia School of Occupational Therapy ("About the pennsylvania," n.d.). In 1940, the

Eastern and Western Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Associations were formed; however, they reunited in 1976 to form the POTA one again (“About the pennsylvania,” n.d.). This organization collaborates with AOTA to advocate and promote accessible, high quality OT services for individuals and groups of consumers (“About the pennsylvania,” n.d.).

### **Theory**

The Kawa Model (Cole & Tufano, 2008) was utilized to guide the interview process. The Kawa Model was developed as a therapeutic and inclusive model to enable OTs to simply ask their clients what they want to do that is meaningful to them and then work with them to achieve this (Teoh & Iwama, 2015). For this qualitative life history, the Kawa Model was utilized to examine Dr. Walkovich’s life journey and turning points as an OT utilizing a strengths-based approach. The Japanese word “Kawa” translates to “river” in English. This is fitting as the Kawa Model is formed around the metaphor of a river and its elements to represent one’s life history (Turpin & Iwama, 2011; Teoh & Iwama, 2015). In order to gain a better understanding of Dr. Walkovich’s life history, the interview questions were focused on the following elements of his river: The flow of his water, rocks, river banks, driftwood, and spaces (Teoh & Iwama, 2015). The flow of his water represents the flow of his life, priorities, and participation in meaningful occupations. The rocks represent problematic life circumstances that he has overcome so far as an OT. The river bank represents his physical and social environments. The driftwood represents his personal characteristics and assets that influence the flow of his water either positively or negatively. The spaces represent the openings between the other elements in the river that influence where the water flows. This can shift the obstacles impeding the flow of his water. This model was appropriate to utilize in this life history study as the purpose was to gain an

understanding of Dr. Walkovich's life journey and his involvement in the evolution of OT practice.

### **Description of the Participant**

The information was gathered directly from Dr. Walkovich during the interview process and through the curriculum vitae (CV) that he provided. Dr. Walkovich began his career in OT as an occupational therapy assistant (OTA) after graduating with his associate's degree from Mount Aloysius Junior College in 1979. He continued his educational endeavors at College Misericordia graduating in 1987 with his bachelor's degree in OT and master's degree in OT leadership and education in 1992. During one of his Level I fieldworks at a state hospital, he encountered an experience that sparked his interest in licensure, legislation, and accreditation. He went on to earn his doctorate degree in health sciences from Nova Southeastern University in 2005.

Throughout his career, Dr. Walkovich has taken on a multitude of positions. Some of these positions include being an certified occupational therapy assistant (COTA), OT, manager, educator, director, and dean. As a COTA, Dr. Walkovich primarily worked in long-term care and with clients who had developmental disabilities. At his first job as a COTA, Dr. Walkovich attended his first POTA meeting which began his involvement in OT at the state, and later the nation, level. While pursuing his bachelor's degree, Dr. Walkovich also worked as a COTA teaching assistant which sparked his interest in teaching and education. As an OT, he worked in outpatient, home health, and industrial rehabilitation settings. During this time, he also consulted in a developmental disability long-term state facility. At Saint Francis University in Loretto, Pennsylvania, Dr. Walkovich is currently the Dean of the School of Health Sciences and Education, but he has held multiple positions here in the past from founding the occupational



therapy program to being a professor in this program as well as a department chair and dean. In addition to these positions, Dr. Walkovich has been involved in OT on state and national levels.

At the state level, Dr. Walkovich has served in multiple positions within POTA. The positions he has held are the following: Chairperson for Working Hardening Special Interest Section for the POTA (1990-1993), past Co-Regional Director, past Treasurer/Recording Secretary, Co-Chair of the POTA Commission on Education (1999-2001), President-Elect (2001- 2002), President (2002-2004), Chair of Pennsylvania Political Action Committee (POTPAC) (2004-2012), and Chair of the Commission on Practice (2007-2008). One of the acts of legislation that was passed in Pennsylvania when Dr. Walkovich was President of the POTA was the approval of low vision into the OT practice act. Dr. Walkovich played a sizable role in getting approval for OTs to be able to accept referrals from optometrists to work with clients who have low vision to increase their success in occupational performance.

At the national level, Dr. Walkovich has served in multiple leadership positions within AOTA, especially on ACOTE. The leadership positions include: Member of the Roster of Accreditation Evaluators for ACOTE (2006-2012), Professional Review for AOTA (2009-present), Team Chair for Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (trained in 2011), and member of ACOTE (2012-2018). Over this period of time, Dr. Walkovich was involved in some of the standard changes that occurred during this time. He was very active in the debate about switching from requiring a master's degree in OT to a doctorate; however, he wishes that he would have been a little bit more involved in the transition process, but he termed out of his position in ACOTE.

Dr. Walkovich has been nominated for and received multiple awards throughout his career as an OT and an educator. Some of these include the following: Member of Who's Who

Among America's Teachers (2002-2005), Swatsworth Award (2003-2005, 2007) and "Advisor of the Year" at Saint Francis University (2005-2007), Who's Who for Outstanding Leadership or Achievement in Occupation, Industry or Profession (2007), and Theodore Soriano Outstanding Service Award for Administrative Employees (2013-2016). These awards recognize the outstanding work and service that Dr. Walkovich has been able to accomplish thus far in his career. These awards acknowledge his impressive variety of skills and dedication including teaching, service, research, contribution to continuing education and professional development, job performance, productivity, innovation, and creativity.

Dr. Walkovich has given a numerous amount of presentations at both the state and national levels as well as writing a number of published papers. The OT related topics that Dr. Walkovich has covered in his presentations include outcome indicators in home health, sensory stimulation for patients with Alzheimer's, the role of OT within special education, perceptions of therapists on home assessment through telehealth versus on-site, post-acute care, retention rate of therapists in the U.S., community fall prevention programming, initiatives for lobbying and licensure in Pennsylvania, using percussion as therapy in school settings, preparing students to work in primary care, interprofessional education, and transitioning into a higher education role. The OT related topics that Dr. Walkovich has covered in his published papers include perceptions of therapists on home assessment through telehealth versus on-site, computer device assessment, improving task attention in children with disabilities, and instructional learning strategies to address generation Y characteristics. Dr. Walkovich has also received two grants from Lee Initiatives. The first grant that he received was to collaborate with a local university and a local hockey program to promote health and wellness in children with disabilities. The

second grant that he received was to help support and give hope to parents and caregiver of children with disabilities.

## **Methodology**

### **Study Design**

This was a qualitative study that utilized a life history approach to focus on Dr. Walkovich's involvement in the evolution of OT practice. The life history approach allowed the focus of this study to be on the Dr. Walkovich's involvement in the evolution of OT practice.

### **Participant Selection**

The participant was selected from a participant list compiled through purposive sampling by the project directors. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interview and the project was reviewed by the UND Institutional Review Board and because of the study design the formal IRB process was waived. There were no issues with gatekeepers as the project directors made the initial contact.

### **Data Collection**

The semi-structured interview was guided by an interview schedule prepared by the project directors; the questions on the interview schedule were designed to be used with all the individuals interviewed as part of the larger project. The student researchers were allowed to modified or added interview questions as needed for each specific interview. Dr. Walkovich was contacted by the researcher through email and set-up an interview. Data was collected by completing an one hour long interview with a semi-structured interview over Zoom, a video conferencing platform, which was recorded in both audio and video formats. The audio that was recorded was then transcribed verbatim and coded by the researcher. In addition to conducting an

interview, a curriculum vitae was obtained from Dr. Walkovich. A review of published papers and journal articles was also conducted.

### **Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness components that increase the reliability and validity on this that increase the reliability and validity include credibility, data triangulation, and member checking. Credibility was utilized to increase the overall trustworthiness as all of the data was obtained directly from the participant, Dr. Walkovich; therefore, the data is assumed to be credible and true. Data triangulation was utilized by having the student researcher obtain data from multiple sources including published papers and journal articles as well as Dr. Walkovich himself to ensure data validity. Member checking was utilized as the student researcher sent the poster draft to the Dr. Walkovich to ensure the information is accurate and valid. The researcher also consulted with the project directors to receive feedback throughout the data analysis process. To assist in eliminating researcher bias, the researcher completed reflexive journals throughout the data analysis to examine personal viewpoints and biases.

### **Data Analysis**

The audio from the one hour interview was recorded on a laptop and transcribed verbatim. During the transcription process, beginning comments regarding data analysis were made and placed into the margins along with memoing. The student researcher kept a reflexive journal to provide assistance when creating the codes. After the transcription process was completed, the researcher coded the interview. The researcher initially coded the transcribed interview into 24 codes that reflected the themes and main points that were discussed during the interview. To be included, the codes had to be evident and reoccurring throughout the transcription. Codes were excluded if they did not reoccur throughout the transcription were

unrelated to OT and the focus of this study. The researcher further developed the 24 codes into four categories and 13 themes by finding commonalities among them (see appendix for visual data display). The categorization process was guided by grouping the recurring codes into groups by commonalities and coming up with names that reflect the meanings of the codes. The themes emerged through the categories that were consistent with the codes and data. A final assertion was made to summarize the findings of the coding process. The Kawa Model influenced the data analysis process and presentation of the findings by gathering information about Dr. Walkovich's life and identifying life events that impacted his involvement in the evolution of OT practice.

### **Findings/Results**

The Kawa Model was used to guide the data analysis process. The themes that emerged reflect the elements that have influenced Dr. Walkovich's involvement in the evolution of OT practice. There were four categories that emerged from the 24 codes: Occupational therapy, education, evolution of OT, and personal experience. Five to seven codes were grouped into each category. Refer to the appendix to see the visual data display for a breakdown of the codes, categories, and themes.

#### **Category One: Occupational Therapy**

Dr. Walkovich often emphasized the importance and the role of OT. Because of this, he has been able to touch the lives of his clients in ways that he may not have realized at the time. He also stressed how vital it is that OTs view clients holistically and not just from a medical standpoint. This category was formed due to a variety of its components that were apparent. The following three themes were developed from this category:

#### **Theme one- Collaboration with OTAs and other health care disciplines**

As Dr. Walkovich started his career as an occupational therapy assistant, he has the utmost respect for occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) and recognizes that collaborating with them for treatment is critical to the profession of OT. In his practice, he also worked closely with physical therapists to collaborate during treatment, especially with balance patients. As Dr. Walkovich currently oversees a number of programs, one of his goals for his department is to increase interdisciplinary work, especially between PT and OT students by utilizing a skills lab to collaborate during treatment sessions.

*“That’s where healthcare needs to go, to respect the other disciplines but to understand the other disciplines and what they do and to work together as a team so that patients get the best care.”*

### **Theme two- Adapting to the client’s needs and environments**

Throughout his career, Dr. Walkovich has worked with a variety of different clients which all required different needs and environments to be successful in their daily occupations. When he worked in home health, he had to be creative to work with the equipment that he was able to bring into the client’s home in order to effectively treat them in their own environment as it was beneficial to the client.

*“I can’t tell you how many miles I have put on my vehicles over the years doing home health treatments. It’s what you do to get the patients the treatments they need.”*

### **Theme three- Dr. Walkovich strongly believes that occupation is the root of OT practice**

When Dr. Walkovich started his profession in OT, the profession was highly based on crafts and occupations; however, as he advanced his career in this profession, it started to move away from its root of occupation and into more of a medical model. As

the profession is moving back towards its roots, Dr. Walkovich is happy about it as he strongly believes that the forefront of everything in the profession of OT has to be occupation.

*“I think we went through a time where we were trying to get a little too high-tech with things and then I think the emphasis has shifted back to occupation which I am happy about.”*

### **Category Two: Education**

Education has played a sizable role throughout Dr. Walkovich’s career in OT. By pursuing multiple degrees, he has been able to advance his career and discover the passion that he has for education. The following three themes were developed from this category:

#### **Theme one- Educational shifts challenge OTs**

Dr. Walkovich actively participated in the debates of a bachelor’s degree versus an associate’s degree and a doctoral degree versus a master’s degree when he served on the accreditation council. He believes that these educational shifts have challenged OTs to provide a higher level of care for their clients and to be more creative during the therapeutic process to make it meaningful to keep the clients engaged and motivated.

*“Well I think it [the shift of educational demands] has challenged us to be better therapists. I think it has challenged us to have more comprehensive treatment plans for our patients. I think it has challenged us to more creative. Patients aren’t staying in hospitals for as long as they used to.”*

#### **Theme two- Dr. Walkovich stated that licensure helps advance the profession of OT**

While serving in POTA, Dr. Walkovich played a major role in getting licensure passed, especially from an educational standpoint while serving on ACOTE. Licensure is

something that Dr. Walkovich is very passionate about because he has seen just how influential and essential it is to move the profession of OT forward.

*“The licensure, for me, helped to move OT forward in the state of Pennsylvania.”*

### **Theme three- Choice is an important component of deciding what OT degree to pursue**

Dr. Walkovich is a proponent of choice in the master’s versus doctorate debate as the option to continue schooling to obtain a doctorate degree is open to OTs to pursue if that is something that they want and are financially able to do so. When going through an OT program, people start to learn what their interests are and where they would like to specialize. This is where the component of choice comes in. Depending what people want to do with their degree is up to them and not all of the options require a doctorate degree at this time.

*“I’m that person that likes to give options to people whether it’s patients, students, or whomever. I think certain parts of the country there may be more of a demand for an OTD than other parts. I live in a very rural part of the country so in our area, there really isn’t a demand for an OTD.”*

### **Category Three: Evolution of OT**

The profession of OT has greatly developed and changed overtime. This evolution has impact the profession as a whole as well as influenced Dr. Walkovich’s enthusiasm to contribute to the profession from multiple aspects. The following three themes were developed from this category:

#### **Theme one- Legislation and advocacy spread awareness and understanding of OT**

While serving on the POTA, Dr. Walkovich utilized legislation to get low vision approved to the POTA practice act. This made it possible for OTs in Pennsylvania to be



able to get referrals from optometrists to be able to work with low vision clients. When Dr. Walkovich started his career with his associate's degree, nobody knew what the profession of OT was or what they did. He believes that advocacy played a vital role in spreading awareness about the great profession OT to where it is now and will keep spreading awareness in the future.

*“The American's with Disabilities Act, the IDEA legislation that certainly helped to shift what OT is and what OT is able to do now.”*

### **Theme two- Dr. Walkovich stated that he utilizes his OT skills everyday life**

Dr. Walkovich utilizes the skills that he has gained through his education and work as an OT every day, especially the group dynamic skills that he has gained during department meetings. The skills that are learned through OT are essential in building rapport with others and can be applied almost universally in many situations.

*“All of the skills that I have learned whether formally in school or whether working with patients, they have all prepared me for what I am doing now.”*

### **Theme three- OT has evolved from being a craft-based profession to an evidence-based profession**

When Dr. Walkovich went for his associate's degree, there was a lot of emphasis based on crafts. When he pursued his bachelor's and master's degrees, he curriculum also became more specialized into areas such as pediatrics, physical dysfunctions, and psychosocial areas of practice and the emphasis was more on theory and evidence-based practice. By building up the research base of OT with more evidence-based materials which assisted greatly in proving the efficacy of OT.

*“We have a lot more research, a lot more evidence-based emphasis to prove the efficacy of our profession.”*

#### **Category Four: Personal Experience**

Dr. Walkovich’s journey in the profession of OT has expanded greatly on his personal experiences. By utilizing these experiences, Dr. Walkovich has been able to contribute to and influence the evolution of OT practice. The following three themes were developed from this category:

##### **Theme one- Dr. Walkovich’s motivation helped him advance his career and the profession of OT**

Dr. Walkovich’s passion for the profession of OT and seeing the impact that legislation and licensure has on the profession has given him internal motivation to keep doing more for the profession. He wants to keep advancing the profession as he is able to and appreciates the challenges that it brings.

*“I think, as I kind of, as my career evolved, as I said starting off as an OT assistant and kept ratcheting up, I have always just had this motivation to continue to do better and continue to do more.”*

##### **Theme two- Dr. Walkovich integrates personal experiences from his career into his practice**

By taking a more nontraditional route to where he is today, Dr. Walkovich was able to tremendously expanded on his skills along the way through the various positions that he held and experiences that he encountered. Because of this, Dr. Walkovich is able to understand people from various points of view and utilize a variety of skills from the skill sets that he has acquired over the years. He has been able to impact a numerous

amount of people in OT through his dedication and contributions that he has made to the profession.

*“I’ve experienced a lot and I think it helps me to understand what people are going through and having been an OT assistant, there is a special place in my heart for OT assistants as well as OTRs.”*

### **Theme three- Dr. Walkovich values mentors and leaders in his life**

In his journey in OT, Dr. Walkovich recognizes the importance and impact that the mentors and leaders had in his life. Dr. Stephen Heater started out as an unofficial mentor for Dr. Walkovich early in his career which later became a more formalized mentorship. Something that Dr. Heater told Dr. Walkovich was, “You need to identify a mentor for your professional life.” This is advice that resonated with Dr. Walkovich and that he utilized when he went on to ACOTE by having Dr. Janet Jedlicka as his mentor on the committee. He shared that his mentors were able to teach him so much and have played a critical role in his career.

*“I think to identify somebody who can kind of take you under their wing and kind of give you a wake-up call sometimes. Who will be truthful to you in a nice way, you know? Who, what did I do good here or what did I not do good here? Somebody who will be truthful and shape you. Somebody you can call and say, “What do you think?” They can help you to go far I think.”*

### **Theme four- Everything in Dr. Walkovich’s life happened for a reason at the right time**

When Dr. Walkovich first started his career path in OT by pursuing his associate’s degree, he never thought that he would be doing what he is doing today for

the profession. He believes that at any given time, you are where you are supposed to be and doing what you are supposed to do. This belief accurately represents his journey in the profession of OT as he started out thinking he would just acquire his associate's degree and be set; however, he went on to pursue his doctorate degree and became involved at the state and national levels to influence the evolution of OT practice.

*“I’m a firm believer that everything happens for a reason in our lives and it happens at the right time and that has been that way it has been for me.”*

### **Final Assertion**

To summarize the findings from the data, the following overall assertion was made: By utilizing his strong internal motivation, Dr. Walkovich has advanced his education and career along with the profession of OT as it is developing, especially from an educational aspect. He feels that his involvement at the state and national level has strongly impacted the lives of his students and his clients.

### **Discussion/Conclusion**

Dr. Walkovich began his career in OT in the late 1970s. At this time, the profession of OT was beginning to move away from its roots in occupation-based interventions to more mechanical-based interventions (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). This shift was heavily influenced by medical rehabilitation which was part of the repercussions from World War II (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). By doing so, OT intervention put emphasis on the impact that the neuromotor and musculoskeletal systems had on function and looked at the underlying source of problems instead of the client from a holistic view (Kielhofner as cited in Christiansen & Haertl, 2014).

Since then, the profession of OT has grown tremendously. It has grown through advocacy and acts of legislation along with policy changes (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). The profession

as a whole has also started to shift its focus back to its roots in occupation to take a top-down approach to look at clients holistically first instead of looking at the underlying source of the problem (Christiansen & Haertl, 2014). The profession has also grown globally and in the evidence-based research to demonstrate the efficacy and effectiveness of OT.

As mentioned previously, the Kawa Model (Turpin & Iwama, 2011) was used as a guide for data collection and analysis in this qualitative life history study. By doing so, the researcher was able to identify and gain a sense of how the components of the river metaphor utilized in this model were represented in Dr. Walkovich's life. These components include the river, rocks, river banks, driftwood, and spaces (Teoh & Iwama, 2015).

Overall, this life history study on Dr. Walkovich has assisted in expanding the OT professional knowledge base in understanding and examining the history of OT. Through the interview with Dr. Walkovich, it was apparent that he possesses a strong passion and internal motivational drive to keep advancing the profession of OT in the work that he continues to do. He has utilized the positions he has held at state and national levels, especially on ACOTE, to contribute to the advancement of the profession influenced the evolution of OT practice.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Walkovich for his time and willingness participate in this study and share his story as well as for his contributions to the profession of OT.

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Appendix

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Dr. Donald Walkovich, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA

Researcher:

Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact</li> <li>- Interdisciplinary Collaboration</li> <li>- Client-Centered Relationship</li> <li>- Service</li> <li>- Occupation</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact of Educational Changes</li> <li>- Licensure</li> <li>- OTD</li> <li>- Educational Advancement</li> <li>- Decision</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocacy</li> <li>- Occupational Therapy</li> <li>- Craft-based</li> <li>- Legislature</li> <li>- Healthcare Growth</li> <li>- Profession Advancement</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mentorship</li> <li>- Leaders</li> <li>- Practice Areas</li> <li>- Involvement</li> <li>- Career Path</li> <li>- Time Management</li> <li>- Personal Belief</li> </ul>			
Categories	Occupational Therapy	Education	Evolution of OT	Personal Experience
Themes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaboration with OTAs and other health care disciplines</li> <li>2. Adapting to the client’s needs and environment</li> <li>3. Dr. Walkovich strongly believes that occupation is the root of OT practice</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educational shifts challenge OTs</li> <li>2. Dr. Walkovich stated that licensure helps advance the profession of OT</li> <li>3. Choice is an important component of deciding what OT degree to pursue</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legislation and advocacy spread awareness and understanding of OT</li> <li>2. Dr. Walkovich stated that he utilizes his OT skills in everyday life</li> <li>3. OT has evolved from being a craft-based to an evidence-based profession</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dr. Walkovich’s motivation helped him advance his career and the profession of OT</li> <li>2. Dr. Walkovich integrates personal experiences from his career into his practice</li> <li>3. Dr. Walkovich values mentors and leaders in his life</li> <li>4. Everything in Dr. Walkovich’s life happened for a reason at the right time</li> </ol>
Assertion	<p>By utilizing his strong internal motivation, Dr. Walkovich has advanced his education and career along with the profession of occupational therapy as it is developing, especially from an educational aspect. He feels that his involvement at the state and national level has strongly impacted the lives of his students and his clients.</p>			