

John Parascandola



John Parascandola is a distinguished scholar and historian of science and medicine. He has made a “major contribution to the history of science” by conducting and publishing “pioneering research in the history of modern pharmaceutical sciences such as pharmacology and medicinal chemistry.”

After receiving his Ph.D. in History of Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1968, he spent a postdoctoral year at Harvard University. Parascandola then returned to Madison as a faculty member to teach history of pharmacy and history of science at the University of Wisconsin from 1969 to 1983. From 1973 to 1981, he also served as Director of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, and since 1989 he has been the Chair of the Institute's Council.

Parascandola was appointed Chief of the History of Medicine Division (HMD) of the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland in 1983 and held that position until 1992. During his tenure at HMD, Parascandola significantly increased the application of computers and other technologies to the Library's historical collections, was notably active in promoting the Division's services to a wide variety of audiences and developed a number of new scholarly programs. In 1992 he became the first incumbent of the position of Public Health Service Historian. His contributions as a Federal employee were recognized through such honors as the Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Award (1989 and 1996), the Assistant Secretary for Health's Superior Service Award (1999), and the National Institute of Health Merit Award (1988).

Parascandola's research interests have focused on the history of modern pharmaceutical and biomedical science, especially pharmacology and drug therapy, and more recently, on the history of the Public Health Service. His book on *The Development of American Pharmacology: John J. Abel and the Shaping of a Discipline*, published by the Johns Hopkins University Press in 1992, was awarded the George Urdang Medal for distinguished pharmaco-historical writing by the American Institute of the History of Pharmacology in 1994. In 2002, Parascandola was awarded the Sidney M. Edelstein Award for Outstanding Achievement in the History of Chemistry by the Division of the History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society.

Parascandola retired as Public Health Services Historian in the Department of Health and Human Services in January 2004, after more than 20 years in Federal service. Upon his retirement, he was awarded the Surgeon General's Medallion, the highest honor that the Surgeon General can bestow. Dr. Parascandola remains active by teaching, doing research, writing, lecturing and consulting as an eminent expert in the history of science and medicine.

He believes “that scholarly work in the history of science is important because it helps us to acquire a perspective on how science has developed over time, to develop a better understanding of how science works, to learn more about the human side of scientists (such as their motivations and convictions), and to recognize the impact of science and technology on society. Although we cannot predict the future from the past, knowing where we have come from at least helps us to have a clearer understanding of our current situation.”

T. A. Perfetti 12/13/2004