For more than 50 years, the goal of the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM; Figure 1) has been to advance the art and science of ultrasound in medicine and research through its educational, scientific, and professional activities. The AIUM has achieved numerous accomplishments in its quest to reach this goal. These accomplishments have helped cultivate the field of medical ultrasound as we know it today.

Over the years, some of our key endeavors have included the formation of a voluntary ultrasound practice accreditation program, the creation of ultrasound clinical practice guidelines and the development of official statements on key topics in ultrasound, and the establishment of an ultrasound education and research fund, as well as serving as a leader in safety and bioeffects issues.

We indeed owe our successes to our many dedicated members, but let us not forget the core of our organization, the devoted executive officers, board of governors, committees, and staff at the AIUM executive office, which will be the focus of this article.

Some of our AIUM old-timers may remember the beginnings of the AIUM and the subsequent establishment of the AIUM executive office, but for those of you who do not remember, this article will chronicle the formation of a new organization and how from its humble beginnings it has managed to flourish over the years.

The 1950s: How It All Began

In the 1950s, as ultrasound was beginning to emerge in the field of medicine, it became apparent that there was need for a formal organization that would support and encourage the use of ultrasound in medicine. In the summer of 1951, Disraeli Kobak, MD, and Cecil Bircher, MD, organized an informal meeting of 24 physiatrists attending the American Congress of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in Denver, Colorado, to discuss the necessity for organizing a subgroup of that congress dedicated solely to ultrasound. These individuals continued to meet each year with the hopes of expanding the scope of physical medicine as a new specialty. This informal group of ultrasound enthusiasts eventually became known as the AIUM (Figures 2 and 3).
Dr. Kobak, who helped organize the very first unofficial meeting of the AIUM, was appointed as the AIUM’s first president and served in this capacity until his death in 1956, at which time Jerome Gersten, MD, who wrote his first article on the medical use of ultrasound, “Ultrasonic Effects on Muscle,” in 1953, became the AIUM’s second president. Dr. Gersten served as president until 1959 but remained on the AIUM Executive Committee until 1966. At this point, the AIUM was still struggling to help ultrasound gain acceptance by the medical community but managed to make headway as it moved into the 1960s.

The 1960s: A Time of Transition

From 1959 to 1962, David Rubin, MD, assumed the presidency of the AIUM as it was beginning to experience great change and rapid growth in membership. Dr. Rubin recognized the versatility of ultrasound and hoped for “greater refinement and increased application of ultrasound through an extension of laboratory research and development.”

Under the presidency of Carrie Chapman, MD (1963–1965), the first and, to date, only female AIUM president, the AIUM’s official constitution and bylaws were rewritten.
In 1964, an important turning point for the AIUM occurred. The AIUM broadened its efforts, which had been focused primarily on the application of ultrasound in physical medicine, to include everyone involved in using ultrasound in medicine, both diagnostic and therapeutic, which would eliminate the need to form 2 separate organizations. This turning point for the AIUM also marked the point at which AIUM membership and interests began to expand rapidly.

Carlos Ruiz, MD, served as AIUM president in 1965, and under his leadership the AIUM expanded its scope to reach ultrasound professionals internationally. He chaired the First Pan-American Meeting of Ultrasonics in Medicine in Lima, Peru.

Prof William J. Fry, AIUM president from 1966 to 1968, continued to lead the AIUM to new horizons, broadening its membership base even further to include engineers, physicists, physiologists, and technologists. After Prof. Fry's sudden death in 1968, George Kossoff, DscEng, assumed the presidency, carrying on the AIUM's shift in focus from physiotherapy to the diagnostic applications of ultrasound.

Joseph H. Holmes, MD, took over the AIUM presidency from 1968 to 1970, further increasing meeting attendance and membership, as well as working toward achieving increased public awareness of ultrasound. Dr. Holmes instituted the William J. Fry Memorial Lecture Award, which recognizes current or retired AIUM members who have significantly contributed in their fields to the scientific progress of medical diagnostic ultrasound. The William J. Fry Memorial Lecture Award is still given out each year and is considered one of the most prestigious awards in the ultrasound profession.

The 1970s: Formalization of the AIUM

Although the AIUM at this point had been in operation for more than 20 years, the need to become a more formal organization was apparent, especially with the AIUM's rapidly increasing membership. By the late 1970s, the membership had grown as high as 3000 members.

During the 1970s, the AIUM took several steps forward by establishing an official executive office and becoming registered officially with the US Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit organization. It also formalized its activities by forming several committees, including the Membership, Ultrasonic Standards, Bioeffects, and Nominating Committees, which are all still functioning today.

Denis White, MD, AIUM president from 1970 to 1972, continued working toward improving public awareness about ultrasound. Under his presidency, a formal channel of communication was established in the form of a quarterly newsletter, which later evolved into a newsmagazine, Reflections (Figure 5).

One of the AIUM's most important committees, the Bioeffects Committee, was established in 1971 under the chairmanship of Prof. Francis J. Fry. The committee's responsibilities included collecting information on bioeffects and determining areas needing definitive studies, as well as acting as a liaison with other related societies and the government. During its more than 30 years of existence, the Bioeffects Committee has been a leader in researching the safety of clinical ultrasound, has held numerous bioeffects summits, and has produced important reports and recommendations on the safety of medical ultrasound, as well as publications such as Medical Ultrasound Safety, which is distributed with almost every new ultrasound machine sold in the United States. The determinations of this committee have been far-reaching and have played a major role in forming the basis for ultrasound safety statements accepted throughout the world.
It was during the 1970s that many of the AIUM’s other committees were established, including the Membership, Education and Regional Teaching Programs, Ultrasonic Standards, and Nominating Committees. These committees served as the core of the AIUM and helped organize its membership and many activities. The work of these committees has resulted in the advancement of the field of ultrasound and has led to increased training in the area of ultrasound and the creation of important publications (Figures 6 and 7), including ultrasound clinical practice guidelines and official statements, as well as patient pamphlets (Figure 8) and monographs.

Another important event occurring in 1971 was registration of the AIUM as a nonprofit organization, which exempted it from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service. This classification proved to be instrumental in helping the AIUM keep its operating costs down and remain a viable organization.

In 1973, the AIUM established a close working relationship with the Journal of Clinical Ultrasound (JCU), which was under the editorship of AIUM past president Joseph Holmes, MD, a pioneer in ultrasound. This relationship was a means for the AIUM to communicate ultrasound-related news and meeting announcements to a much larger audience.

The JCU published original articles in the field of ultrasound, biological studies, short articles on works in progress, case reports, reviews of publications, and invited review articles, and it was the perfect medium for the AIUM to share its own related news. By the end of 1977, the number of articles in the JCU had almost tripled, which demonstrated the fact that the field of ultrasound was growing. The JCU was the AIUM’s official journal until January 1982, when the AIUM established copyright and ownership of its own journal, the Journal of Ultrasound in Medicine (JUM). George Leopold, MD, was chosen as editor of the JUM.

The AIUM was steadily gaining recognition in the medical community. At the 1974 AIUM Annual Convention during the presidential address by Gilbert Baum, MD (AIUM president, 1972–1974), it was announced that the AIUM was recognized by the American Medical Association (AMA) as an official national scientific medical organization for listing in the AMA directory. It was also announced that articles appearing in the JCU would be listed in the National Library of Medicine’s Index Medicus beginning in February 1974.
William McKinney, MD, served as president from 1974 to 1976. His clinical and technical knowledge helped the AIUM to further diversify its membership base. Projects during his term as AIUM president included development of the first registry examination for sonographers and assistance with further development of competent working committees for the AIUM.

Ross Brown, MD, assumed the presidency from 1976 to 1978, with the goal of moving the AIUM from a fledgling to a larger-scale organization. With the AIUM’s membership increasing so rapidly and its involvement in the field of medical ultrasound growing, an executive office was urgently needed to maintain the organization of the AIUM and its activities.

In December 1974, Dr. Brown, together with Drs. Horace Thompson and William McKinney, oversaw the establishment of the first official AIUM executive office in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Up until this point, the AIUM executive office had been run on an unofficial basis, traveling from place to place, residing with each new president. The office now consisted of a full-time staff of 5 who addressed member concerns and inquiries. Donna LeMaster was hired as executive secretary and helped organize the membership list, finances, and filing systems. Now that the AIUM had an official executive office, the next order of business was to become incorporated, which officially occurred in March 1975 (Figure 9).

With an official home office in place for several years by this time, the Executive Committee believed strongly that an executive director was needed to implement policies and run the daily activities of the AIUM, as well as to help the organization in the scientific advancement of programs. In 1979, Stephen Jerrick, PhD, was appointed as the AIUM’s executive director and served in that capacity until August 1982. Michael Meinerz, former advertising manager for the AIUM, then took over as executive director until August 1986.

Horace Thompson, MD, coauthor of the first journal article published in the United States on the use of ultrasound in obstetrics and gynecology (American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology 1965; 92:44), led the AIUM into the 1980s as president. Dr. Thompson had worked with ultrasound pioneer Joseph Holmes in the ultrasound laboratory at the University of Colorado, in his obstetric and gynecologic practice.

The 1980s: A Time of Rapid Growth

In 1981, under the leadership of Barry Goldberg, MD (AIUM president, 1980–1982), the AIUM restructured its operating procedures to ensure its success for years to come. Changes to the AIUM bylaws and constitution that allowed more individuals to become full participating members were made. Membership continued to grow from 4000 in 1980 to nearly 5000 in 1981.

In addition, Dr. Goldberg initiated negotiations for a new publishing contract under which the AIUM would have ownership of its official journal, which would allow the AIUM more control over its organization and selection of its publisher. Dr. Goldberg served as head of the Archives Committee for many years and has been instrumental in preserving the AIUM’s historical information.

In 1981, the AIUM executive office moved from Oklahoma to a new office in Bethesda, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, DC, to increase its visibility to the public, the ultrasound community, and the US government. Four employees from the original Oklahoma staff relocated to the new office.

Figure 9. This document, dated March 1975, is the AIUM’s official certificate of incorporation.
That same year, the AIUM established the Memorial Hall of Fame Award. Today, this award continues to serve as a posthumous tribute to a creative and devoted physician, research scientist, sonographer, or other individual who has been an active member of the AIUM and contributed to the field of ultrasound in medicine. A plaque honoring each member of the Memorial Hall of Fame is displayed in the AIUM’s executive office.

Under the presidency of Marvin Ziskin, MD (1982–1984), another important development occurred: the establishment of the AIUM’s own official journal, the JUM, on January 1, 1982. The JUM’s replacement of the JCU, which was owned and published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc, enabled the AIUM to gain more control over publishing issues and would help secure the AIUM’s financial future. Dr Ziskin played an instrumental role in several of the AIUM’s most important endeavors, including propelling the influential work produced by the Bioeffects Committee, as well as ensuring a smooth transition of the AIUM’s official journal.

George Leopold, MD (Figure 10), who had served as editor for the JCU, was chosen to serve as editor of the JUM. With the acquisition of the JUM, Reflections, the AIUM’s newsmagazine, was retired, but much of the information it once provided would be included in the JUM. Today, the JUM has a circulation of more than 8300 and is considered by members to be one of the most important benefits of the AIUM (Figure 11).

Volume 1, Number 1 of the AIUM Newsletter (Figure 12) was published in July 1985 under the presidency of Richard Meyer, MD (1984–1986). The newsletter served as a means to keep the AIUM membership informed of the organization’s activities.

During his term as president, Dr Meyer played a crucial role in the planning and designing of the AIUM office, then in Bethesda, Maryland. Much of his planning and design efforts were carried over to the current AIUM office in Laurel, Maryland. Dr Meyer also helped foster a strong relationship with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), particularly with the FDA’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health. These early safety and bioeffects meetings between the FDA and the AIUM helped create a push toward more sensitive ultrasound instruments using lower levels of energy.

In 1987, James Packer, PhD, CAE (certified association executive), joined the AIUM as executive
director. Dr Packer helped further organize the operating structure of the AIUM into several key departments, including marketing, membership, and convention and educational services.

Looking to its financial future, the AIUM pursued the idea of purchasing office space for its headquarters rather than leasing. Thus, in 1986, a committee was appointed to determine the best location for the AIUM’s executive office. It was decided that the office should remain in the Washington, DC, area because of its close proximity to the National Institutes of Health and other medical societies and agencies with which the AIUM interacted.

As AIUM president from 1986 to 1988, Christopher Merritt, MD, led the development of the AIUM/National Electrical Manufacturers Association/FDA Output Display Standard and served as a founder of the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Vascular Laboratories, which was housed in the AIUM executive office.

William O’Brien, Jr, PhD, served as president from 1988 to 1991, during which time he was involved in the Output Labeling Standards Committee and served as cochair of its Thermal Index Task Group, which resulted in the development of the Output Display Standard, the standard that the FDA recognizes in its diagnostic ultrasound equipment approval process. He later cochaired the Ultrasound Education Committee (1992–1994), which led to the publication of the output display standard educational booklet Medical Ultrasound Safety, the AIUM’s top-selling publication in 1995.

In the late 1980s, in a move to further increase public awareness about ultrasound, the AIUM began to include additional specialty areas in its signature series of patient brochures, entitled What You Should Know About Your Ultrasound Examination.

**The 1990s: The AIUM Reaffirms Itself as a Leader in Ultrasound**

During the 1990s, the AIUM continued to establish its presence in the ultrasound community, producing official statements on key ultrasound issues and publishing clinical scanning guidelines and numerous videos and publications that ultrasound professionals could rely on to help them in their professional careers. The AIUM also began speaking out against the use of ultrasound for entertainment purposes, an issue that it continues to speak out against today.

In January 1989, the AIUM Newsletter was renamed The Reporter. In 1990, the AIUM moved production of the JUM in-house, which led to the growth of the AIUM staff. The office installed its first Apple Macintosh computers to be used for production of AIUM publications and the JUM. In 1992, the AIUM had grown to 3 times the number of its original staff, with 19 full-time employees. Although plans to purchase an executive office were well in the works, the AIUM headquarters moved temporarily to Rockville, Maryland, while its search for the best space and location continued.

From 1991 to 1993, John Hobbins, MD, served as the AIUM’s president. During his tenure, he addressed the membership’s need for more educational opportunities, and the number of publications and videotapes for patients and professionals that the AIUM produced was increased. Dr Hobbins also oversaw the development of a task force for developing training requirements for sonologists performing ultrasound scans and interpreting images and an

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**Figure 12.** Volume 1, Number 1 of the AIUM Newsletter, published in July 1985, to keep the AIUM membership informed of the association’s activities.
Accreditation Committee. The work of this task force and committee led to the implementation of the AIUM’s ultrasound practice accreditation program in 1996.

According to a 1992 membership survey, the most common reasons for joining the AIUM were to obtain a subscription to the JUM, have a professional ultrasound affiliation, and keep abreast of the latest ultrasound developments.

Michael Tenner, MD, was AIUM president from years 1993 to 1995, during which time he was instrumental in the acquisition of the AIUM’s current headquarters building. On October 29, 1993, the AIUM opened its doors in Laurel, Maryland, which remains the site of the AIUM executive office today (Figure 13).

In 1994, a pilot program for ultrasound accreditation in obstetric and gynecologic practices was implemented. During the presidency of Peter Arger, MD, from 1995 to 1997, the success of this program led to the official formation of the AIUM’s ultrasound practice accreditation program in 1996 (Figure 14), which was later expanded to include general/abdominal and breast ultrasound. In 1997, the AIUM joined with the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Vascular Laboratories to provide combined comprehensive ultrasound accreditation and simplify the process for practices seeking accreditation in vascular and obstetric, gynecologic, or abdominal/general ultrasound.

In 1995, as the AIUM joined the “information superhighway,” Dr Arger oversaw the implementation of an AIUM website and creation of an e-mail system through which members of the AIUM could be reached. This acquisition was instrumental in providing better customer service to the AIUM membership. During Dr Arger’s tenure in 1995, the AIUM began developing plans to create an Education and Research Fund to establish research opportunities in ultrasound.

In 1997, under the presidency of Frederick Kremkau, PhD (1997–1999), the AIUM was given a seat on the AMA’s House of Delegates, which provided the AIUM a formal opportunity to interact with other medical societies. Dr Kremkau also hosted the AIUM’s Breast Summit in 1997 and subsequently established an ad hoc committee to develop focused training guidelines for performing breast ultrasound examinations. The Sonographer Award was established under his presidency as a means of recognizing and honoring current or retired AIUM sonographer members who have significantly contributed to the growth and development of diagnostic ultrasound. The first sonographer award was presented to Donna M.
Kepple, RDMS. A Sonography Section was also established to allow greater participation in AIUM activities by sonographer members.

In September 1997, Carmine Valente, PhD, CAE, took over as executive director and later became chief executive officer (Figure 15). Some of his initial accomplishments included reorganization and streamlining of the office staff structure and implementation of a new computer system to more effectively manage the activities of the AIUM. One continuous theme that Dr Valente has strived for has been communication, which has been greatly increased among AIUM staff, the Board of Governors, and the Executive Committee, as well as AIUM members. Another of Dr Valente’s goals has been to regain the AIUM’s full accreditation status with the ACCME to offer continuing medical education (CME) activities. The AIUM achieved this goal and was most recently awarded 4-year reaccreditation in 2003. During Dr Valente’s tenure as chief executive officer, the AIUM has paid off its building loan and has become a financially stable organization with great potential for continued growth.

In 1999, the AIUM’s ultrasound practice accreditation program expanded and began offering accreditation in breast ultrasound. On July 15, 1999, the first 3 breast ultrasound practices were accredited. A contest was initiated in 1999 to rename the AIUM’s newsletter, The Reporter, to something more attuned with the organization’s focus. The name Sound Waves was submitted by an AIUM member to replace The Reporter and began with the November 1999 issue.

The New Millennium: The AIUM in Full Force

The millennium marked even more change and growth for the AIUM. In keeping with the technological advancements of the time, the AIUM began the planning stages for implementing specialty section listservs and online systems for submitting abstracts for the annual convention and manuscripts to the JUM. Plans for an online version of the JUM were also in the works.

The year 2000 marked a turning point for the JUM. After 22 years of exceptional and dedicated service, Dr George Leopold retired as editor-in-chief. Beryl Benacerraf, MD (Figure 16), who was selected as the JUM’s new editor-in-chief, took over with the January 2001 issue and has since increased the size and stature of the already prestigious journal (Figure 17). Today, more than 8300 ultrasound professionals subscribe to the JUM.

The AIUM’s ultrasound practice accreditation program has now accredited more than 1300 practices in the United States and Canada.

Lawrence Platt, MD, led the AIUM into the new millennium, serving as president from 1999 to 2001. As a strong proponent of CME, Dr Platt increased the AIUM’s CME offerings, implementing 2- to 3-day regional courses held throughout the United States and Canada.
Dr Platt played a key role in the reorganization of the AIUM’s committees, helping to make them more functional. He has also been instrumental in the AIUM’s fight against the use of medical ultrasound for entertainment purposes, serving as a spokesperson and representative of the organization in many media interviews and medical meetings.

Under Dr Platt’s leadership, in an effort to promote the importance of ultrasound to the public, the AIUM began sponsoring Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month in October 2000. This outreach campaign has been highly successful in educating and familiarizing the public about medical ultrasound. Hospitals and ultrasound facilities around the world continue to support Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month by hosting their own educational activities during October.

In 2003, several related medical societies, including the American Society of Echocardiography, the Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography, and the Society for Vascular Ultrasound, joined this public awareness campaign; the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers and Cardiovascular Credentialing International joined the campaign in October 2004 (Figure 18).

Alfred Kurtz, MD, served as AIUM president from 2001 to 2003. Under Dr Kurtz’s leadership, collaboration with related societies increased and eventually led to the creation of joint clinical scanning guidelines with the American College of Radiology and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

In keeping with the technological advancements of the time, Dr Kurtz focused efforts on maintaining AIUM membership by instituting a new e-associate (electronic) affiliation and a student category of membership, as well as enhancing online capabilities that now enable members to renew their memberships, change user names and passwords, and update personal information online. In addition, 11 listserv (group e-mail discussion) sections on specialty areas in ultrasound were offered as part of membership benefits.

It was during Dr Kurtz’s presidency that the AIUM’s Education and Research Fund, which was created several years earlier, was able to award its first-ever research grants in March 2001. Because of the generosity of AIUM mem-
bers, manufacturers, and individuals, the AIUM is able to award these grants each year.

In January 2002, the online version of the JUM debuted, featuring search capabilities and many special links. In addition, Rapid Review, an online manuscript tracking system, was implemented. These online abilities were important steps forward for the JUM and helped the AIUM reach more ultrasound professionals than ever.

In 2003, Lewis Nelson, III, MD, RDMS, took over as president of the AIUM. During the year and a half he has served as president, he has propelled the growth of the AIUM. Dr Nelson has overseen the implementation of online CME tests and the creation of a new online store, which our members consider valuable benefits of membership.

In addition, Dr Nelson has organized the hosting of forums on nuchal translucency, entertainment ultrasound, and compact ultrasound, which have helped generate consensus on these topics and also helped bring the ultrasound community together on issues of importance to ultrasound at large.

In November 2003 under Dr Nelson’s presidency, the AIUM was awarded full accreditation for 4 years and was cited as a “best practice” by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education.

In preparation for the AIUM’s 50th Anniversary celebration in 2005, medical ultrasound history articles, authored by key figures in the field, have been published in the JUM and in a series of commemorative newsletters detailing the AIUM’s history and the contributions our presidents have made to the organization (Figure 19).

Throughout its history, the AIUM has been involved in many diverse activities related to the growth and development of medical ultrasound, and its involvement will only continue to grow during this ever-changing time in the field of diagnostic and therapeutic ultrasound. It is our hope that ultrasound professionals will continue to look to the AIUM for guidance and support.

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