

MEMORANDUM

To: Social Security Advisory Board
Subject: Biography of Teresa Pfender
Date: February 4, 2015

Teresa Pfender's initial training was in the areas of cognitive development and learning theory, in which she authored several professional publications. She worked during college in an animal learning laboratory and then for five years in a research institute devoted to studying the impact of early childhood intervention on learning, behavior, and school performance. She became an attorney 27 years ago when, as a single mother, she needed to find a reliable way to support her young son. Pfender was in private practice with a large commercial law firm for 10 years, becoming a shareholder and director. At the firm, she was responsible for paralegal and new associate training, in addition to her legal work. She married an active-duty member of the military and left the law firm shortly thereafter when they received an overseas assignment. Her introduction to Social Security disability law came a couple of years after they returned to the States when she began work for a claimant's representative, spending about four years preparing cases for hearing and preparing all documents related to more than 100 Federal district court appeals for that office. She joined the Social Security Administration in May 2006 as a decision writer at the Salt Lake City hearing office. She was promoted to group supervisor, and later joined the Office of Appellate Operations as an appeals officer. After serving about a year in the Division of Quality, she was selected for her current position as a detailee and then as lead in OAO's training office. Ms. Pfender is descendant of a Northern New Mexico Spanish land grant family, and continues her family's tradition of weaving in the traditional Rio Grande style. She also actively works in a wide range of other fiber arts.