



IMAGINING IN TIME

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AANA'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY: REMEMBERING THE SILVER JUBILEE

Key words: AANA Annual Meeting, AANA history, anniversaries.

Anniversaries, especially those divisible by 25, are always great cause for celebration. Just as the 75th anniversary is being commemorated this year, so was the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists' 25th anniversary in 1956.

Planning begins

President Minnie Haas kicked off the anniversary celebration as she closed her president's report at the 1955 Annual Meeting. She spoke of plans to commemorate the founding of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) in 1931 at the 1956 Annual Meeting and declared the 1956 fiscal year "to be our Silver Jubilee Year."¹ Recommendations on how to celebrate the 25th anniversary fell to the Planning Committee; its members in 1955-56 were Jessie Compton, Minnie Haas, Helen Lamb, and Marie McLaughlin. Among their recommendations that were carried out were a blue and silver (AANA's official colors at the time) sticker (Figure 1) to be placed on first class mail envelopes, inviting charter members to attend the Annual Meeting banquet, and crystal paperweights with a commemorative seal to be distributed at the banquet.

Leading up to the Annual Meet-

ing, Gertrude Fife, past president and editor of the *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists*, authored a *Journal* editorial on the 25th anniversary that appeared in the February 1956 issue. Looking back she reflected:²

We now have 106 schools of anesthesia. We have helped in their organizational problems. We have a continuing inspection and grading of schools. We have a qualifying examination which means that before any nurse may become a member of our association she must first pass a rigid examination. Through our organization we have become known in the hospital field. The anesthetist is no longer just a member of the surgical team made available to the surgeon in the operating room. It was largely as a result of our efforts that anesthesia has become recognized as an art and a science.

Minnie Haas also spoke on the AANA's history when she gave a speech at the Carolinas-Virginias Assembly meeting in Roanoke, Va, in April 1956. She reviewed the progress the Association made in the past 25 years and highlighted work in education, accreditation, and publicity. She reported on a few interesting membership statistics: 4% of members were men, 4% were in the military, 6% were Catholic sisters, and 41% were married. In looking to the future, Haas said, "The maintenance of high standards of service and of professional attitudes are the goals we must keep ever before us."³

Congratulations flow in

Just prior to the Annual Meeting in September, congratulatory telegrams from state associations, regional assemblies, and surgeons began to arrive in the Executive Office (Figure 2). Alfred Blalock, surgeon-in-chief of Johns Hopkins Hospital, wrote, "Mankind owes and will continue to owe a great debt of gratitude to you."⁴ US President Dwight D. Eisenhower also sent a telegram; it read in part, "through your service to patients, surgeons, and hospitals, and your help in establishing schools of anesthesia, your organization is making a significant contribution to the improvement of health services in our country."⁵

State Night Friendship Dinner

The focus of the anniversary celebration was the Annual Meeting held September 17-20, in Chicago. The first special event occurred at the State Night Friendship Dinner on Monday, September 17. Opal Schram, chair of the Convention Committee, introduced each president of the affiliated state associations, and President Minnie Haas presented each with a silver certificate of affiliation (Figure 3). Eleven state associations—Ken-

Figure 1. 25th Anniversary sticker



(Courtesy of AANA Archives.)

Figure 2. Telegram from Maryland State Association of Nurse Anesthetists



(Courtesy of AANA Archives.)

tucky, Territory of Hawaii, Arizona, District of Columbia, Maine, Rhode Island, Idaho, New Mexico, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Wyoming—affiliated with AANA in 1956, which brought the number of affiliated groups to 49. The unexpectedly large crowd of 600 enjoyed a dinner of vegetable soup, barbecued ribs, julienne potatoes, and apple pie. Entertainment for the evening was provided by the Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin state associations; they carried on the state night tradition of performing skits.

Jubilee Tea

On Tuesday, a Jubilee Tea was hosted by the Assemblies at the Congress Hotel which was the headquarter hotel for the meeting. At that time in the Association's history, most of the state associations had joined together in small regional groups called Assemblies. Members were greeted by a receiving line consisting of the chairmen or alternate from the following

assemblies: Middle-Atlantic, New England, Southeastern, Tri-State, Upper Mid-West, and Western States. Outgoing President Minnie Haas and incoming President Lillian Baird, elected at the Business Meeting that preceded the tea, also greeted the attendees.

During the tea, representatives from the state associations and assemblies presented gifts to AANA in celebration of its 25th anniversary. Most of the gifts were items for the executive office including 24 china teacups, 36 silver teaspoons, 2 persimmon colored armchairs, a ginger colored leather lounge chair, a sage green leather sectional davenport, and copper enameled ashtrays. Three gifts are in the executive office today: the silver tea and coffee service from Alabama (Figure 4), the silver tray from Colorado, and the silver candlesticks from Louisiana. Alabama's gift was presented by Verna Rice, an AANA charter member, in memory of founder Agatha Hodgins. Rice said

Figure 3. President Minnie Haas (left) presents a certificate of affiliation to Nebraska President Olga Schulz at the 1956 Annual Meeting in Chicago.



(Courtesy of AANA Archives.)

Hodgins' "untiring efforts and God given foresight has left us with a precious heritage to pass on to those of the next generation."⁶

Annual Banquet

Closing the Annual Meeting was the Banquet on the evening of Wednesday, September 19. Attendees dined on roast prime ribs of beef, chateau potatoes, broccoli in butter, and the aptly named ice cream fantasie jubilee. AANA charter members Mary Martin, Margaret Marsh, Mary Lucille Goodman, Esther Miel, Verna Rice, Lucy Richards, Gertrude Fife, and Helen Lamb were special guests of the AANA and sat at a charter members table. Lucy Richards and Helen Lamb also were recipients of the Award of Appreciation for their 25 years of service to AANA. Both women were past presidents, frequent committee members, and ardent proponents of AANA's work.

The prior day at the Business Meeting, the membership voted to create a new category of membership—life membership—open to all members who had paid active member dues for 25 years.

Figure 4. At the Jubilee Tea, held during the 1956 Annual Meeting in Chicago, Verna Rice (second from right) presents Alabama's gift to (left to right) outgoing President Minnie Hass, Tri State Assembly Chair Matilda Welinske, and incoming President Lillian Baird.



(Courtesy of AANA Archives.)

Figure 5. Gertrude Fife, Lucy Richards, and Helen Lamb with their honorary life membership cards at the 1956 Annual Meeting Banquet in Chicago.



(Courtesy of AANA Archives.)

The members also unanimously voted to confer honorary life membership upon Richards and Lamb; the vote was unknown to the women and came as a surprise at the Banquet. Prior to this, the only honorary life membership had been presented to Past-President Gertrude Fife in 1946; Fife joined Richards and Lamb as the 3 were presented with silver membership cards (Figure 5).

The Jubilee song

A song to the tune of Auld Lang Syne was written for the jubilee, but the author is unknown. The *AANA NewsBulletin* account of the Annual Meeting does not indicate when the song was sung; perhaps it was at the Banquet or the less formal State Night Dinner. A sample of the lyrics are:⁷

The Jubilee we'll ne'er forget
Nor Presidents divine
Nor Miss McQuillen, who has served
AANA so fine.

The Institutes held now and then
Help keep our minds alert
To new and better methods so
NA's will be expert.

So nineteen hundred fifty-six
Great Silver Jubilee,
AANA will ne'er forget
For twas enjoyed with glee.

Chorus:

So as we leave this Jubilee
And all our friends so dear
Let's drink a toast of kindness
For our dear AANA.

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