CRNA Helen Lamb Frost, one of the original founders of the association, awarded the AANA Annual Agatha Hodgins Award for Outstanding Accomplishment

Helen Lamb Frost, CRNA, one of the original founders of the association, was awarded the AANA Annual Agatha Hodgins Award for Outstanding Accomplishment at the formal dinner-dance on August 25.

The award, which was established one year ago, is aimed at recognizing individuals whose “foremost dedication to excellence has furthered the art and science of nurse anesthesia.”

Helen Lamb founded the School of Anesthesia, Barnes Hospital, St. Louis, Missouri in 1921. She served as Director of this school until 1951. She was at the first organizational meeting of the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists on June 17, 1931, and was elected third vice president of the association. Mrs. Frost served as chairman of the AANA Education Committee from 1932 through 1939, and established the curriculum and minimum standards for schools of nurse anesthesia. She served as president of the AANA from 1940-41.

Helen Lamb collaborated with Dr. Richard von Foregger in the development of the von Foregger anesthesia machine; and administered the first endotracheal anesthetic in the United States for the thoracic surgeon, Dr. Evarts Graham. She also contributed the chapter on endotracheal anesthesia (which has become a classic) to the book, Thoracic Surgery, authored by Dr. Graham.

Helen Lamb’s acceptance speech is as follows:

“The honor of bestowing upon me, the Agatha Hodgins Award is truly a happy and proud moment for me. It was a great privilege to have been associated with Miss Hodgins as a student, supervisor, and friend over a period of years. As you know, our association was conceived by Miss Hodgins. I was fortunate to have been asked by her to play a role in the early development of the association, then called the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists—NANA. Objection was raised because of the initials spelling NANA, so the name was changed to the ‘American Association of Nurse Anesthetists.’”

“Agatha Hodgins and her associates recognized a great need for such an organization and with true courage and determination put together a cohesive group to uphold the dignity of our profession, to set forth guidelines to maintain our integrity as anesthetists, and to grow into a viable entity as we have become.”

“I accept this award for all those hard-working, truly dedicated nurse anesthetists, who in the early formative years of our association had such obstacles to overcome; that if it were not for the true dedication to the principles and ideals as we have now, we would have fallen by the wayside.”

“I can remember the challenge of starting my own school of anesthesiology at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. I say anesthesiology, rather than anesthesia, as it is the study and teaching thereof. I remember the great encouragement from Dr. Evarts Graham, known as the ‘father of modern surgery’—the long hours of tedious preparation for curriculum; the first successful pulmonary lung surgery I assisted with Dr. Evarts Graham; the many new and innovative ideas that came to me—particularly, with Dr. Foregger in the mid-1930’s, and the metric gas measurements that had not been used. The small contributions I was able to make to our continuing search for higher learning and new techniques in our field of anesthesiology, have given me a true sense of accomplishment, and I am grateful to have played such a part in history.”

“I remember also the many, many students, co-workers, associates and doctors, I have worked with who have gone on to greater works, and I am proud of my association with them.”

“As you probably know, I have never missed an annual meeting of the AANA, and I don’t plan to miss any for a long time to come. As your senior past-president, I take great pleasure in saying to you collectively—I am proud of you.”

“Thank you again—I shall always treasure your trust and confidence in me as a teacher. And in closing, I say to you—I am proud to be Helen Lamb.”

Members of Helen Lamb’s family, old and new friends, Barnes’ alumni, and her many associates in anesthesia witnessed the award presentation.