Helen Vos Presented with Helen Lamb Award
Outstanding Educator Award

"...When I consider all the joys and benefits I have experienced from you and our specialty, I feel as if it should shatter this award in many pieces and give each of you a little piece," said Helen Vos, recipient of the Helen Lamb Outstanding Educator Award, as she accepted it from John Garde.

"This year the Helen Lamb Award recognizes the accomplishments of Helen Vos, CRNA, BSN," said AANA Executive Director John F. Garde, CRNA, MS, FAAN. "Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "A teacher affects eternity; [she] never knows where [her] influence stops." He surely must have known Helen. To this day, her 'pearls of wisdom' are still quoted."

Ms. Vos is directly responsible for the education of countless numbers of CRNAs across the county. She gave her students a strong foundation for life-long learning and continues to touch the lives of students and faculty. She was the first program director at Hurley Hospital in Flint, Michigan, and the second at North Carolina Baptist Hospital. She also served as an educator at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis and taught anesthesia in Pakistan for four years. Helen constantly updated her knowledge base so she could bring to her students relevant, factual information.

The Helen Lamb Outstanding Educator Award, established in 1980, was established to honor Helen Lamb, CRNA, who chaired the AANA Education Committee from 1931 through 1939 and established the curriculum and minimum standards for schools of nurse anesthesia.

While Ms. Vos was director at North Carolina Baptist Hospital, she served as the 1966 AANA President. She also traveled throughout the country presenting continuing education lectures and taught countless numbers of CRNAs the meaning of the "three-lead EKG." She continued to participate in continuing education long after her retirement and in her eighth decade still serves the profession. She is currently on the Advisory Committee, Nurse Anesthesia Program, North Carolina Baptist Hospital.

Ms. Vos taught by example a value system based upon high ethical standards and mentored many students and associates toward teaching roles. Several of her students have served as program directors and three as AANA Presidents. For the last 16 years, she has served as a member of the Editorial Board of Current Reviews for Nurse Anesthetists. She continually encourages and supports the efforts of young CRNAs as authors and researchers. Described as a "legend in her own time" by Dr. Frank Moya, chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology at Mount Sinai Hospital, Miami, "Helen is a shining example of the type of cooperation and relationship that should exist between nurse anesthetists and anesthesiologists in advancing the profession of nurse anesthesia and the art and science of anesthesiology."

Comments from Ms. Vos

Quoting Ms. Vos: "Dear family and friends, thank you for this moment. It is a precious time for me, and arriving to this time was not accomplished without friends and family. Some of them are here. Please meet my brother Otto and his wife Judy Vos, my brother Clarence and his wife Jeanne Vos, and some good North Carolina friends — Anist and Clyde Mosley, Rachel Law, and CRNAs Sandra and Dick Ouellette."

"To many of you, I belong to one or two past generations in our profession. Since every generation stands on the shoulders of its predecessors, please let me tell you a little about how it was eons ago!"

"We had ether. Those were not the good old days. But during this time in South America two unknown women sat in a high mountain cave cooking a brew of roots from the forest. At a certain point they poured the brew into bamboo tubes and sent them to their village. The village men dipped their arrows in it, and hunting became a simple event. No need to pierce their prey in a vital spot, just anywhere under the skin would do, for the brew was absorbed and the animal fell paralyzed — though alive. The village ate well!"

"An adventurist scientist visited this village and brought a tube of this brew to the United States. The days of d-tubocurare had begun."

"During World War II, I remember seeing the first two little vials of d-tubocurare standing on the shelf. It paralyzed patients but did not produce analgesia or anesthesia. Why? From this question the explanation of depolarization and repolarization was born, and I'm proud to say I was in the midst of this revelation. You asked me to come to your seminars and workshops to talk about this theory. You cannot imagine the pleasure and satisfaction I had watching your faces as sparks of understanding shot from your eyes."

"Soon after this we became 'monitor' happy. Prior to this time I seem to remember that the equipment needed for EKGs filled a small house. Soon this was 'downsized,' and EKGs appeared in our operating rooms. Now we had little squiggles to watch! But, what did they say? I spent hours with Arthur Guyton's Textbook of Medical Physiology, and his graphic explanations revealed their secret. Again you asked me to speak to your members about the usefulness of EKG monitoring. For me it was more fun than ever! Again little sparks of understanding were shooting everywhere. Some of you know the ecstasy of having your words understood."

"And now I stand here with this worthy award you have given me. I want to tell you that a few weeks ago I was the recipient of our clever administration of anesthesia during surgery. It was a delightful and satisfying experience. I hope you can understand that when I consider all the joys and benefits I have experienced from you and our specialty, I feel as if I should shatter this award in many pieces and give each of you a little piece."

"However, I'm not going to do that! I shall accept it, cherish it, and say thank you, thank you! God Bless you everyone."