Ceremony at University Hospitals of Cleveland

Plaque Honoring Agatha Hodgins and AANA’s Founding Dedicated

Agatha Hodgins, CRNA, and the founding of the AANA were honored at a recognition ceremony held at the University Hospitals of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio, on October 14, 1995. A bronze plaque commemorating AANA’s founder Agatha Hodgins and the first meeting of the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists (later to be renamed AANA) is being mounted on the wall entering the operating room suites.

Ms. Hodgins’ goal was to create a professional organization dedicated to the needs of nurse anesthetists. She and 40 nurse anesthetists* representing 12 states founded the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists on June 17, 1931 at the Lakeside Hospital (now the University Hospitals of Cleveland). At the time of the founding, Ms. Hodgins was working as the “special anesthetist” to surgeon, Dr. George Crile, and was conducting anesthesia educational programs at Lakeside Hospital for nurses, physicians and dentists, which she had done since 1910. The first official class of the Lakeside Hospital School of Anesthesia graduated in 1916. The first official headquarters of the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists was a classroom in the Department of Anesthesia located at the University-Lakeside Hospital in Cleveland.

Recognition Ceremony

The recognition ceremony was hosted by the University Hospitals and the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University. Each of the following individuals presented remarks and historical vignettes about the Lakeside Hospital and the work of Ms. Hodgins: Jack Kless, CRNA, MSN, nurse anesthesia program director and instructor, Mt. Sinai/ Frances Payne Bolton Nurse Anesthesia Program; Joyce Fitzpatrick, PhD, FAAN, dean of Nursing; Helmut Cascorbi, MD, PhD, director of Anesthesiology; James Redford, MD, associate director of Anesthesiology; Charlene Phelps, MSN, FAAN, vice president for Nursing; Christine Zambricki, CRNA, MS, current AANA president; and Mary DePaolis-Lutzo, CRNA, PhD, immediate past AANA president.

Dr. DePaolis-Lutzo noted that twelve nurse anesthetists were present for the “simple but inspirational ceremony dedicating the plaque.” CRNAs in attendance included current employees of the University Hospitals, faculty from Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, officers/members of the Ohio Association of Nurse Anesthetists, and John F Garde, CRNA, MS, FAAN, AANA executive director. Following the ceremony, participants attended a luncheon hosted by the School of Nursing.

The concept for the plaque dedication was initiated in 1994 by Dr. DePaolis-Lutzo who asked Evan Koch, CRNA, MSN, AANA Archives liaison, and Lee Fosburgh, MLS, MA, AANA archivist, to pursue the project. Both Mr. Koch and Mr. Fosburgh were unable to attend the program due to previous commitments. Mr. Kless facilitated the project working with Dr. Fitzpatrick, Dr. Cascorbi, and the hospital administration.

The University Hospitals of Cleveland Archives collection on Agatha Hodgins is now being made available to the public.

*There were 53 nurse anesthetists who signed the founding statement.

At the Dedication...

Holding the bronze plaque is Jack Kless, CRNA, MSN, nurse anesthesia program director and instructor, Mt. Sinai/Frances Payne Bolton Nurse Anesthesia Program (center). Standing behind him (l to r) are: John F. Garde, CRNA, MS, FAAN, AANA executive director; Christine Zambricki, CRNA, MS, AANA president; Mary DePaolis-Lutzo, CRNA, PhD, AANA immediate past president; Almer M. Douglas, CRNA, staff nurse anesthetist, University Hospitals of Cleveland; Sharon Harsull, CRNA, faculty member, Cleveland Clinic Foundation/Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing/Case Western Reserve University, School of Nurse Anesthesia; Paul R. Blakely, CRNA, MSN, program director and instructor, Cleveland Clinic Foundation/Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing/ Case Western Reserve University, School of Nurse Anesthesia; and Bertha M. Lovelace, CRNA, president, Ohio Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

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