two great leaders...

Former AANA executive director Florence A. McQuillen dies

Miss McQuillen remained at the Mayo Clinic until 1948 when she became AANA executive director, a position she held until her retirement in 1970. AANA past-president Hazel Currier (1966-67), CRNA-retired, a close personal friend of Miss McQuillen, recalls how she became involved in the AANA. “We were nursing students together at the University of Minnesota, and we remained close friends ever since. I pushed and pushed to get her to speak at an AANA Annual Meeting, which she finally did. She was very well received, and spoke at the next one. People took notice; they began to recognize her ability. When she was offered the job of executive director, she phoned me and told me that she would only take the job on one condition—that I would agree to serve on the Bylaws Committee. I agreed. Miss McQuillen became executive director, and I ended up serving as Bylaws Committee chairman for 16 years!"

“Right person at right time”

According to Marie Bader, CRNA, AANA past-president (1968-69), “She was the right person at a time when we needed someone to take over the pressing needs of the Association. She was a dedicated woman whose life was the Association.” Miss Bader commented on her relationship with Miss McQuillen at the 1981 Annual Banquet during the presentation of the Agatha Hodgins Award. “I sincerely believe we would not be here celebrating our 50th Anniversary if it had not been for the careful charting of our course by this lady.”

In her 22 years as executive director, Miss McQuillen was influential in virtually all areas of the AANA’s growth and expansion. For example, in 1948 when she was hired, AANA membership numbered 3,200 nurse anesthetists. At the end of 1970, the year she retired, the number had swelled to more than 14,500 mem-

(continued on page 4)
Florence McQuillen
(continued from page 1)

bers. Called a woman of vision by many CRNAs who knew her and worked with her, Miss McQuillen "set the wheels in motion" for gaining recognition for the AANA by external groups such as the American Hospital Association in 1949 and the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In 1952, HEW officially recognized the AANA's authority to grant accreditation for nurse anesthesia programs and to grant certification for nurse anesthetists.

Toward the end of her tenure as executive director, Miss McQuillen instituted the AANA's voluntary continuing education program, which made the AANA the first professional nursing organization to recognize the need for continuing professional education and the first to initiate a CE policy. This eventually led to the adoption by the members of a mandatory CE program.

"All nurse anesthetists owe a debt of gratitude to Miss McQuillen for her courage, vision and support of nurse anesthesia educational programs," commented AANA president Sandra J. Kilde, CRNA, MA. "Without the groundwork of the 1950s and 60s, we would not have the strong educational progress that we have seen in the past few years, nor would we have sound projections for the future."

Another CRNA, upon hearing of Miss McQuillen's death, said, "Miss McQuillen was always doing things for other people and taking those who were in need under her wing. She never talked about it, she just quietly went about helping people because she wanted to. She truly cared for members as individuals."

Miss McQuillen's family has requested that any memorial donations be sent to the Educational Loan Fund, which Miss McQuillen founded.

A final goodbye . . .

Sandra J. Kilde, CRNA, MA
AANA President

"On December 23, 1981, I was privileged to represent our Association at the funeral services for our former executive director, Miss Florence McQuillen.

I had previously had the opportunity of visiting with Miss McQuillen in early December when I delivered the Agatha Hodgins Award to her. On that day, I went to see her with Martha Lundgaard, [a senior AANA member] and the three of us visited for about three hours, with Miss McQuillen reminiscing about the early years of the AANA.

Ironically, on Monday, December 21, I mailed a Christmas card to Miss McQuillen and on my daily "to do" list I had made a note to call her. Before I had the opportunity to call, however, I received notification of her death. I immediately made plans to attend the funeral in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Although I did not know Miss McQuillen as well as many who worked with her over the years, nevertheless I feel very honored to have been able to be present at her funeral. I also consider myself very fortunate to have met several of her family members who were so gracious to me and so appreciative of my presence.

I am also most thankful that we, as an Association, honored Miss McQuillen with the Agatha Hodgins Award in the 50th year of our existence. It was fitting and proper."