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*Fiscal Year 2014 Student Representative to the AANA Foundation Board of Trustees*

## Student Spotlight

The AANA Foundation is pleased to present Student Spotlight, a new feature that recognizes student registered nurse anesthetists who have captured attention through their dedication to education, professional excellence, and overall commitment to advancing nurse anesthesia.

### Fara Clarke, RN

It is not often that you meet an individual who has the leadership ability to inspire others, propel organiza-

tions on a path to success, and change the direction of what one day will become history. Grounded by integrity and strong ethical standards, leaders possess the visionary foresight to guide diverse populations toward a common goal. The combination of these qualities is partly an inherent gift and partly an acquired set of skills.

At the 2013 AANA Fall Leadership Assembly in Miami, Fla., I met Fara Clarke. At an open forum, in front of the AANA Board of Directors, Fara had the courage to speak. Her message was simple: 1) She was grateful for the leaders that have paved a bright path for nurse anesthesia students, and 2) she encouraged students to become the leaders that will continue this rich legacy for generations to come. After the forum I spoke with Fara and, within minutes, I thought to myself, "This is definitely a person that will be a national leader and have a significant impact on the future of the nurse anesthesia profession." One particular statement from Fara still resonates with me to this day: "My passion is nursing, but my purpose is to encourage people. So no matter where my career takes me, as long as I am encouraging and inspiring others, then I know I am doing the right thing."

Fara's record of leadership dates back to her childhood. As a teenager, Fara was inducted into the National Honor Society and was highly recognized for her community service activities. Fara created an after-school step team program for middle-school girls that became so popular the attendance tripled the following year. Although leading this team was a demanding role, Fara says, "It was so inspiring to see them mold into proud, self-confident young women." In addition to her community service activities in high school, Fara also was a highly accomplished clarinetist and a section leader in her high school band.

After high school, Clarke served as a university mentor for freshman students and was also elected as a board member for the Maryland Association of Nursing Students. After graduating with honors from Towson University, Fara began working as a critical care nurse at Johns Hopkins Hospital. During her first year in this role, Fara was recognized as a leader at the bedside and received the "Best Family Advocate" award.



Fara Clarke, RN

Currently, Clarke is a second-year student at Florida International University's Nurse Anesthesia Program. Her program director, Dr. Jeffrey Groom, describes her as a "very dedicated and hard-working student who serves as both a role model and an inspiration to her classmates and her future clinical colleagues...Without a doubt, Fara will be one of the major leaders of the future for nurse anesthetists," he added. She was elected as a class officer and also volunteered to be a student liaison for the AANA Health and Wellness Committee. Since assuming these roles, Clarke has been writing health and wellness newsletters as a way to share practical advice to her fellow students on healthy and positive avenues to overcome the stressors of anesthesia school. Recently, Fara was elected to be the national Student Representative for the AANA Health and Wellness Committee for 2014. Overall, it is clear that Fara's many talents will lead to a successful career and her impact will be far reaching. ■