

**2025 Agatha Hodgins Award for Outstanding Accomplishment Winner**  
**Sharon Pearce, DNP, CRNA, FAANA, FAAN**

Wow—what an incredible honor it is to receive the Agatha Hodgins Award. This is truly something I never imagined would bear my name. When I look at the list of past recipients, it feels surreal. These are people I've admired for years—mentors, trailblazers, legends. Honestly, I still feel like I'm trying to find my seat at the grown-ups' table. So you can imagine my shock—and a healthy dose of disbelief—when Jan Setnor and Bill Bruce shared the news with me.

First, I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the people who nominated me. My podcast co-host on Beyond the Mask, Jeremy Stanley—my partner in crime and occasional audio therapist. Patrick Ballantine, former North Carolina Senator, who somehow made politics not only interesting but actually understandable to a nurse anesthetist. And Sandy Ouellette, my program director, who is probably the main reason I stayed involved in this profession... mostly because I was terrified of her! She told us on day one that we must be members of the AANA and give back to the profession that was going to be good to us. And she was right.

Of course, I have to thank my family. They've joined me at countless meetings over the years. My children—Brett, Michelle, and Danielle—learned early what nice lodging and room service were, and to this day, they refuse to stay at a hotel without it. My husband, Pearce, has always supported—and fully understood—my addiction to the AANA.

To all the CRNAs who have worked alongside me, covered shifts, came in early, stayed late, and gave me the time and space to do the work I felt called to do—thank you. You helped me keep moving forward.

And finally, to my besties I met through this organization nearly 30 years ago—Tracy Castleman, Carole Doyscher, and Jackie Rowles—thank you for being my tribe, my sounding board, and my biggest cheerleaders. I absolutely wouldn't be here without you.

Now, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the woman behind the name—Agatha Hodgins. If you don't know her story, I invite you to check out Episode 14 of Beyond the Mask, where Sandy Ouellette and Nancy Maree take a deep dive into her legacy. It's one of our early episodes, so be kind—but her story is powerful. Agatha had the vision—and the grit—to found the AANA in 1931, at a time when women had only recently secured the right to vote, let alone lead professional organizations.

And let's not forget—in 1937, our opposition submitted a plan to the American College of Surgeons to eliminate nurse anesthetists altogether. Bold move. But... nice try. We're still here. Still standing. Still providing excellent anesthesia care—and yes, still raising our voices when it matters.

Thank you again for this truly humbling honor. I'm deeply grateful. There will always be more work to do, but I'll leave you with this: If your presence doesn't make an impact, your absence won't make a difference. So make it count.