

Editorial...

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANESTHESIOLOGY OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT MEDICAL CENTER (JULY 1, 1958 – JULY 1, 2008)

By July 1, 2008, The Department of Anesthesiology at the American University of Beirut Medical Center would be fifty years old. To commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Fiftieth Anniversary, tribute and gratitude ought to be given to those anesthesiologists, whose visions and dedications during the last fifty years, laid down the basics, the sustained growth and brought it to the highly acclaimed international status it presently enjoys.

The Founder of the Department, Professor and Chairman Dr. Bernard Brandstater (1958-1969), nurtured the “Birth”, the “Toddler years” and “Early Childhood” of the Department. His main contributions consisted of establishing the academic identity of the Department, developed education based on basic sciences, increased residency training from two to three years, and started research. He managed some encountered challenges such as introducing IPPV into AUB and Lebanon, devised prolonged intubation as an alternative to tracheostomy in cases of tetanus neonatorum, launched obstetrical epidural analgesia and innovated a nylon epidural close-ended multiorificial catheter. He widened the horizons of the Department such as organizing international conferences and founded the Middle East Journal of Anesthesiology (1966) for which he gave it its famous motto “*For some must watch while some must sleep*”, and was its first Editor-In-Chief.

Gratitude is also due to Drs. Ernest Guy (1962-1963) and Laurence Egbert (1974)

Professor and Chairman Dr. Anis Baraka (1974-2007), the longest and uninterrupted sit-in Chairman of a single Department of 43 years, and an international figure in the field of anesthesiology, carried the torch of growth and developed the Department into an unprecedented excellence. His main contributions consisted of education, clinical care and research and publication. He encouraged and coerced the writing the history of anesthesia and contributions of Arab/Islamic, Christian and Jewish scholars to medicine and the relief of surgical pain. He has been the Editor-In-Chief of the Middle

East Journal of Anesthesiology since June 1978. He attracted good medical graduates to the front door of the specialty, promoted the prestige of the specialty, increased the specialty's market demand and succeeded in placing the Department of Anesthesiology, the American University of Beirut and the Republic of Lebanon, on the Anesthesia Map of the World.

Professor Dr. Musa Muallem, one of the first resident graduates of the Department (1957) and a contemporary of Dr. Brandstater and Dr. Baraka, has dedicatedly served as a pivotal pillar in the development of the Department for more than fifty years, both in his teachings, training, and in dire needs his innovative gadgeting capabilities. He established the Respiratory Therapy Division at the Department and was its Medical Director. He is credited for introducing jet ventilation into anesthesia practice, developed his own Jet Ventilator and contributed to the management of the difficult airway. He is currently an Honorary Editor of the Middle East Journal of Anesthesiology.

During the Lebanese hostilities (1975-1991), Drs. Baraka and Muallem, together with the rest of the Staff of the Department, exhibited deep loyalty, stamina, resourcefulness and carried out their duties towards casualties, in situations of hardships of security, lack of equipment and risk of losing life.

The late Professor Dr. Sania Haroun-Bizri, the first lady Professor of Anesthesiology, actively contributed to teaching and clinical activities and was an active member of the Open-Heart Program.

Grateful acknowledgment is also due to all those who served in anesthesia as Division of Surgery prior to 1958 (Pre-Departmental), of physicians, residents and nurse anesthetists who laid down the grounds on which the present independent Department of Anesthesiology, founded in 1958, has been built upon: Drs. Veronica Bakamjian, Khatar Kanaan, Richard Patterson, Bernard Brandstater, Musa Muallem and Miss Rena Myers.

In this auspicious occasion of the Golden Jubilee, the present Professor and Chairman of the Department (October 1, 2007), Dr. Ghassan Kanazi, presents his Mission Statement, futuristic views and plans for the Department.

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