

CNRN Corner

2008–2009 ABNN Board of Trustees

The American Board of Neuroscience Nursing welcomes the 2008–2009 Board of Trustees: Brekk MacPherson, Trustee; Angela Starkweather, President; Barbara Correll, Public Member; Sharon Baker, Secretary-Treasurer; Sandi Brettler, AANN Board Liaison; Joanne Turner, Trustee; Heather Hodges, Trustee; and Kim Meyer, Trustee. Elections were held in March, and the newly elected members took office at the AANN 40th Annual Educational Meeting in Nashville, TN.

Agnes Marshall Reflects on the History of the CNRN

Angela Starkweather, PhD ACNP-C CNRN

In 1969, during her American Association of Neuroscience Nurses (AANN) presidential speech, Agnes Marshall first proposed a certification process for neurosurgical nurses. Knowing that it would take time, effort, and financial support, she helped to position AANN as the premier nursing organization to offer certification in a nursing specialty. Speaking about the development of criteria for certification, Agnes stated, “It was essential that the process should be developed by nurses for nurses.” During the following years, select members offered to meet and develop *Standards of Care for Neurosurgical Nursing* and *Core Competencies for Neurosurgical Nursing*, which were completed in 1977. The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) was affiliated with AANN at the time and provided AANN with \$20,000 in financial support. AANN also received financial support through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

In 1978, Agnes Marshall, Kathy Ridelman, Pat Rauch, and Marilyn Ricci started the process of test-item development. Their meetings were frequent and intense, as this process involved the categorization and analysis of each test item. That same year, Vicki Stockton and Agnes Marshall were elected as president and president-elect, respectively, of the American Board of Neurosurgical Nurses (ABNN), which was created to oversee the certification process. Of the five ABNN members, three professional organizations were represented: AANS, the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, and the Association of Operating Room Nurses; the American Nurses Association was an observer. A testing organization named the Psychological Corporation was consulted, with Sally Anne Henry assigned specifically to help direct the administration of the certified neuroscience registered nurse (CNRN) certification. Later that year, the first CNRN examinations were launched, with \$200 as the initial cost of the examination. The Psychological Corporation oversaw the testing process at testing sites throughout the United States. Concerning the initial exam, Agnes indicated:

It was a trying time, as some members were in disagreement about the content on the exam; however, by explaining the vast nature of neurosurgical nursing, most eventually agreed. And because of the excellent process that we had in place for creating and analyzing the test items, the CNRN credential established a very good reputation. Many other organizations, such as the American Association of Critical Care Nurses and Oncology Nurses Society, sought assistance from ABNN in their certification process.

In the mid-1980s, the names of AANN and ABNN were modified, changing *neurosurgical* to *neuroscience*, to reflect the change in nursing science and technology evolving in the United States.

The neuroscience nursing community is indebted to the work of Agnes Marshall, as a founding member of ABNN and past-president of AANN, as well as the entire AANN Board and all who were committed to laying the groundwork and planning for certification and the future of CNRN in the United States. The CNRN credential continues to reap the rewards of their diligence and commitment to the profession of neuroscience nursing. Eventually, ABNN became independent of AANN to provide more autonomy in the mission of each board and to facilitate ABNN becoming a not-for-profit corporation. The ABNN and AANN Boards, with the Neuroscience Nursing Foundation, work closely together to unite and support neuroscience nurses around the world.

Regarding the future of the CNRN, Agnes stated, “It must continue, as it really says who we are in this specialty.” She also has observed a wider recognition of the CNRN credential as she speaks at hospitals and universities across the United States. “There seems to be some competition between hospitals,” she stated. “The administrators of nursing will come up to me and tell me how many CNRNs they have at their facility. I think the Magnet credential has really helped to give added recognition.” Undoubtedly, the CNRN reputation is well-earned and will continue to be a vital credential that invokes confidence and pride in neuroscience nurses who have accepted this calling. Agnes added, “Certification encourages people to improve their level of competence as a continuing education process. It tells others that you are committed to improving as a professional and is a symbol of loyalty toward advancing neuroscience patient care.”

ABNN would like to recognize the rich history of our founding members and extend gratitude to these nurse-leaders who have shaped the landscape of the neuroscience nursing profession. Because of their vision, determination, and dedication, the CNRN credential is an emblem of excellence in neuroscience nursing. We give our deepest thanks to the founding members of ABNN and their successors: Vicki Stockton, Agnes Marshall, Kathy Ridelman, Marilyn Ricci, Pat Rauch, and Dr. Clark Watts.

Angela Starkweather, PhD ACNP-C CNRN, has been a member of AANN for 10 years and ABNN for 2 years. She has maintained a CNRN credential for 8 years and is a nurse practitioner at the Washington State University Intercollegiate College of Nursing.

Key Dates for Fall CNRN Exam

Fall CNRN Exam Application Deadline: Friday, September 5, 2008

CNRN Recertification Application Deadline: Friday, October 3, 2008

Computerized Exam Window: Saturday, October 11–Saturday, November 8, 2008

Fall CNRN Paper-Pencil Exam Date: Saturday, October 25, 2008

CNRN Recertification Late Fee Application Deadline: Thursday, January 30, 2009