

Caryl J. Guth, M.D.

2006 Distinguished Service Award Recipient

By Patricia A. Dailey, M.D., 2002-2003 CSA President



CSA Past Presidents Dr. Guth and Dr. Dailey

Caryl Guth is a special person. Few people are as lucky as I to have had Caryl as a mentor, advocate, friend and business partner. I first came to know Caryl in 1988 when I came to Mills Hospital in San Mateo after five years on the faculty at UCSF. Caryl was Chair of the Department of Anesthesiology, and everyone—anesthesiologists, surgeons, nurses and administrators—knew she was the boss and the “go-to” person to get things done. A surgeon could not lay hands on the abdomen during induction without the go-ahead from Caryl. When she left a message on the hotline to administration, she got immediate results. Patients knew this, too. At Mills, we try to honor patient requests for anesthesiologists, and Caryl had a large retinue of patients who scheduled their surgeries around her availability.

Caryl is a fabulous mentor; she is responsible for getting me (and many others) involved with the CSA and ASA. Caryl was president of the CSA in 1982-83 (the second woman in that role) and advised and supported me as I progressed through the ranks to become president in 2002-2003. While I had always been active with the Society for Obstetrics and Perinatology, Caryl encouraged me to attend the CSA Board of Directors meetings even before I became a delegate. She understood the need for anesthesiologists to be involved and visible—on their hospital boards, in community organizations and with professional societies.

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She was an ASA delegate for 24 years! Everyone knew her, and Caryl was frequently at the microphone, both at the ASA Reference Committees and the House of Delegates. She was the Chair of the ASA Committee on Communication from 1987-89 and introduced the Leadership Spokesperson Training Program and the ASA Media Award. She served as associate editor of the *ASA Newsletter*. She chaired the ASA Committee on Professional Diversity in 1996-1997 and advocated more women having committee appointments, a first step in the rise to ASA leadership. She influenced the elimination of masculine gender references in the Bylaws.

When I look back at the *CSA Bulletin* during Caryl's term as CSA president, I am struck by her foresight in dealing with topics such as independent practice of CRNAs, professionalism, reimbursement and contracting. Caryl stressed the importance of an independent Anesthesiology Department (instead of an Anesthesia Section as part of the Surgery Department). She pushed for anesthesiologists having a seat at the Medical Staff Executive Committee; during her presidency, the CMA passed a CSA-authored resolution that encouraged the formation of Anesthesiology Departments and representation on the MSEC by anesthesiologists. Caryl also pushed for professionalism by anesthesiologists and stressed the importance of patient contact, including rounding on patients both the day of surgery as well as the day after.

Caryl retired from active practice in 1999 but has continued her involvement in patient care and advocacy. She now is promoting the integration of holistic concepts into medical practice. An alumna of Wake Forest University School of Medicine, she endowed the Caryl J. Guth Chair for Holistic and Integrative Medicine through a generous and visionary gift in 2002. After a national search, Kathi Kemper, M.D., M.P.H., was named the first Caryl J. Guth Chair for Holistic and Integrative Medicine in 2003. That same year, holistic and integrative medicine was incorporated as an official theme in the medical school curriculum at Wake Forest.

Caryl is truly deserving of CSA's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award. She exemplifies outstanding and meritorious service to the CSA and Anesthesiology.



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