

Robert B. King, MD
AANS President
1980-1981



Reflecting upon the 50th Anniversary of the AANS stimulates happy memories of Boston - excellent scientific programs, musical neurosurgeons providing an evening of both classical and current music, a good deal of history that only Boston can provide and the opportunity to preside as president during a special year. It also brings to mind an opportunity to announce a program that started out as an idea waiting for fertile ground to grow.

The year after we moved to Syracuse, the persuasion occurred to me that more basic research was essential to the future of neurosurgery. Very little of it was being encouraged in training programs around the country. Granted, the length of training required to become a first class neurosurgeon was long and arduous. To add additional years of research to that process required dedication and discipline. However, to offer such an opportunity although somewhat unique, might appeal to just the kind of individual that most training programs would like to have in their departments. But how would it be financed? Certainly the training centers were straining to provide adequate training salaries for their programs in the 70ies and before.

With my presidential year approaching I sought the advice of a number of my senior colleagues about creating a foundation funded by contribution from members of the AANS. With the help of a dedicated research advisory committee, grants would be evaluated and awarded by merit. The number of grants would depend on the earned interest of investments from monies contributed by members, industry, and private individuals. The advice I received was tepid but not discouraging.

As I prepared my Presidential Address, the requirements of a recipient became apparent; a person willing to spend two additional training years in a neurosurgical program in basic neuroscience research; a neurosurgical department willing to sponsor the individual; a research project that could lead to helping neurosurgeons enhance their appreciation of the extraordinary anatomic and physiologic characteristics of the nervous system and enrich their clinical skills.

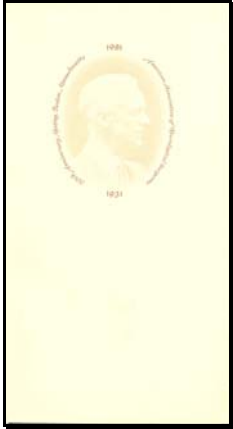
Robert B. King, MD

It also became apparent that the success of such a venture depended on practicing neurosurgeons and other contributors; those who would help solicit in the funding; those who would seek out large contributors; those who would contact business; and those who, responsible for selecting the recipients, would spend their energies in evaluating application and deciding on the merit of each. Drs. Bill Buchheit, Tom Langfitt, Sidney Goldring, Bob Grossman and many others have sustained this venture for decades.

After twenty-five years it is apparent that the neurosurgical community has dedicated its energies and resources in perpetuating the Foundation. The benefits are incalculable. I was Chairman of the Executive Council for eight years. Drs. Bob Ojemann, then “Buzz” Hoff, and now Mary Weiss in that position followed me. The contribution of enthusiasm, creativity and energies has sustained the original intent of the Foundation. A tribute to their dedication is the 114 recipients of research grants over the last 25 years. Three of the awards were returned due to other funding, therefore, the number is officially 111. Of these, 64 were research fellowships and 50 were Young Clinician Investigator awards. Their research has and continues to strengthened neurosurgery. The advances of knowledge in neuroscience are astonishing.

I look back on the initial idea with deep appreciation. I thank all those who have made the Neurosurgical Foundation a dream that became a reality or as one chairman said, “From little acorns, big oak trees grow.”

July 2006

Vital Statistics	
	<p>1980-81 Officers: Robert B. King, President W. Kemp Clark, President Elect Richard L. Rovit, Vice President Byron C. Pevehouse, Secretary Bruce F. Sorensen, Treasurer</p> <p>Annual Meeting Location: Boston, MA</p> <p>Presidential Address: Traditions, transition, and the torch. JNeurosurg 55:329-336, 1981.</p> <p>Cushing Orator: Julius Axelrod, PhD, Chief, Section on Pharmacology, Laboratory of Clinical Science, of NIH. Catecholamine, Neurotransmitters, Psychoactive Drugs and Biological Clocks. JNeurosurg 55:669, 1981.</p> <p>Award: Cushing Medal - Bronson S. Ray</p> <p>Membership: 2466</p>