

## A Brief History

On February 24, 1951, the Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. was founded with a small group of seven as charter members, namely: Quintin J. Gomez (Founder-President), Magpuri Bataclan, Leticia Salas-Curtin, Jose Denoga, Paz Y Fores, Mariano S. Geronimo and Julia Presbitero (Secretary-Treasurer). The Philippine Medical Association (PMA) gave its seal of approval in May 1952 by granting the charter of affiliation to the society. Under Dr. Gomez leadership, the society embarked on programs to address the shortage of anesthesiologists by conducting two six-month training courses for government physicians from different provincial hospitals.

Dr. Gomez relinquished the presidency to Dr. Braulio de Castro who became the second president of the PSA in 1964. During his term, the first national convention of the society took place at the University of Santo Tomas on December 9-11, 1965. The three regions in the Philippines were represented by leading anesthesia practitioners in the regions: Irineo Geslani (Luzon); Francisco Osmena (Visayas), and Amador Villanueva (Mindanao).

In 1967, with Dr. Benigno Sulit, Jr. as PSA President, a refresher course was incorporated for the first time in the scientific activities of the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting. Since then, the refresher course precedes every annual meeting providing updates to anesthesia practitioners. A very significant accomplishment during his term was the creation of the Philippine Board of Anesthesiology (PBA). It was primarily conceived to elevate and maintain the standards of practice of anesthesiology in the country. Created by the PSA in a board resolution on May 18, 1967, the Philippine Civil Service Commission recognized the PBA as the sole certifying body of anesthesiology specialists in the country on October 5, 1967.

Dr. Luisita de Castro became president in 1968 and with her excellent administrative skills, the PSA office was established at the Philippine Medical Association Building. During her term the first bi-monthly publication of the PSA Newsletter edited by Dr. Lourdes Africa was published. Dr. Africa later became the 8<sup>th</sup> president of the PSA in 1974 and during her term put the society on a sound financial standing. She also became the first editor of the Philippine Journal of Anesthesiology (first published in December 1973).

During the 4<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the society, the first official chapter of the PSA was established – the Cebu chapter. More chapters were eventually established namely, the Mindanao-Sulu chapter in 1970; the Eastern Visayas chapter in 1972 and the Northern and Central Luzon chapter in 1973. In later years, for reasons of geography and limited resources, chapters were further subdivided. Despite problems posed by distance, local perception and roles of anesthesiologist members, sustained efforts of succeeding leaders of the PSA have encouraged and established programs to improve the quality of patient care, improve the image of the anesthesiologist and gain recognition from other physicians, the government and the public as well.

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