The Lewis H. Wright Memorial Lecture is sponsored annually by the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology (WLM) and honors its namesake, who was a pioneer in American anesthesiology. Dr. Wright was committed to enhancing the stature of anesthesiology as a clinical science and as an advanced medical specialty. He was a founding member of the WLM Board of Trustees and later served as its president emeritus. In 1973, the New York State Society of Anesthesiologists endowed this lectureship to honor Dr. Wright, who died the following year.

This year’s distinguished guest is George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator of the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology and Clinical Associate Professor of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine and of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Bause was born in Pennsylvania and, as the son of a military chaplain, lived in 12 homes in his first 20 years of life. Moving from Air Force base to Air Force base, George collected mementos along the way—a foreshadowing of things to come. Childhood accidents left him with contact, and then scald, burns and unrelated minor surgeries left him with vivid memories of three anesthetic inductions. Perhaps these experiences inspired his interest in the science of pain relief. On November 22, 1963, George’s eighth birthday, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated; the dramatic events cultivated in George aspirations to become a physician. George’s first major summer job was moving furniture—another skill that has proved valuable as he moved exhibits in large vans across the country for the WLM.

Dr. Bause graduated with a B.S. cum laude in Biophysics from Ursinus College in 1977. During his junior year abroad, Dr. Bause was the 1975-76 Visiting Andrew Mutch Scholar to the University of Edinburgh and its nearby research nuclear reactor. While in Scotland, George grew to love history, art and rare books. In 1981, Dr. Bause received Doctor of Medicine and Master of Public Health degrees from Johns Hopkins University (JHU). Dr. Bause completed an internship, residency and fellowship at JHU. From 1984-85, under Chair Mark Rogers’ guidance, George drafted and completed the United States’ first geriatric anesthesia fellowship (JHU-NIH) with clinical days at Johns Hopkins Hospital and research days at the National Institute on Aging. It was during his residency that George became the Curator of the Benson Memorial Library and Museum in the JHU Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine (1982-85).

In 1985, Dr. Bause accepted a position in the Department of Anesthesiology at Yale University. Dr. Paul Barash, Chair, encouraged George to serve as the Curator of the Yale Museum of Anesthesiology. George was thrilled to meet WLM Trustee Rod Calverley after the latter’s visiting professor lecture on October 7, 1986. Dr. Calverley and Dr. Nicholas Greene facilitated George’s appointment as the Acting Curator of the WLM of Anesthesiology in 1987. Dr. Bause’s passion for collection...
of anesthesia and medical books, artifacts, equipment and ephemera grew exponentially. He served as Co-Curator for the ASA Exhibit “Pain and Its Relief” at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution (1989-91). George also served as the Associate Curator for the United Church of Christ Archives (1999-2009). George earned the sobriquet “The Indiana Jones of Anesthesia” as he traveled to 45 states, 56 countries and seven continents; yes, he even collected items from Antarctica! George acquired for the WLM six of the earliest ether and chloroform inhalers from the late 1840s. In July 2009, he procured the world’s first record of the synthesis of ether, Valerius Cordus’ De Artificiosis Extractionibus, which was published in 1561. George’s other major finds include J.M. Churchill ivory acupuncture needles (ca. 1821) and autographed letters and notes by anesthesia pioneers Charles Jackson and Horace Wells. As an international courier of medical antiques, George has negotiated his way past cultural committees, customs agents, tax collectors and, of course, airport security.

Dr. Bause has shared his historical expertise in 440 publications, 25 WLM exhibits at ASA annual meetings and 1,100 individual displays at the WLM. In his role as an Associate Editor of Anesthesiology, we know George best for his series of 210 “Anesthesiology Reflections.” These elegant pictorial vignettes describe rare books, artifacts and equipment in a colorful and succinct fashion. His work has graced the covers of Anesthesiology and Anesthesia & Analgesia. In an ironic twist, he created the cover and four “Reflections” for the June 2011 issue of Anesthesiology that featured his distant relative, Sir Humphry Davy.

The title of George’s talk is “Fair Recollections of Paul Meyer Wood, M.D.: A Towering Pioneer of Anesthesiology.” Dr. Wood was a “Man for All Seasons.” Born in Indiana and educated in New York City, he donated his collection of anesthesia books and apparatus to the New York Society of Anesthetists. When a heart attack restricted his clinical activities, Dr. Wood served as the Secretary to the American Board of Anesthesiology (ABA); the Secretary-Treasurer of the ASA; the business manager of the journal Anesthesiology; and the Curator-Librarian of the WLM. In 1945, Dr. Wood received the ASA’s first Distinguished Service Award. In 1949, he wrote an article for the Journal of the American Medical Association titled “Functions of the American Board of Anesthesiology: Past, Present and Future.” His comments regarding the ABA still ring true today: “To render sound judgments, fair decisions and accurate impartial investigations of irregular or unusual situations requires full attendance and open-minded and reasonable attitudes. These attitudes have characterized the specialty boards in general and the Board of Anesthesiology in particular.” In this talk, Dr. Bause will describe the many accomplishments of Paul M. Wood, how he promoted anesthesia and what he means to present-day library and museum curators.

The year 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the WLM’s establishment in the Park Ridge ASA headquarters. Dr. Wood’s initial donation to ASA was 70 books. Today, the WLM has 13,000 books and journals; 2,300 rare books; hundreds of anesthetic, surgical and medical artifacts and equipment; and the archives of several subspecialty societies. Indeed, it is the largest anesthesia-related library and museum in the world. Dr. Wood served as an inspiration to Dr. Bause; and for George, presenting the Lewis H. Wright Memorial Lecture is truly a special and moving honor. On behalf of the WLM, we thank Dr. Bause for his steadfast commitment to a spectacular library and museum and, for his spirit of adventure and for his passion for discovery.

References: