At its annual spring meeting, the Board of Trustees of the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology (WLM) chose Kathryn E. McGoldrick, M.D., as the recipient of its Distinguished Service Award. The board instituted this award just last year, at which time it honored three earlier volunteers for their service, which together totaled more than 100 years. In their duration, scope and quality of service, Dr. McGoldrick’s contributions to the WLM and to the medical specialty of anesthesiology follows in the tradition of her predecessors.

Dr. McGoldrick’s service to the WLM began in 1994, when she was first elected to the board. As a trustee, she served on many committees, including Marketing, Acquisitions and Nominations. She chaired the Lewis H. Wright Memorial Lecture Committee and co-chaired the Publications committee. These assignments required time, thought and work – something expected of all WLM Trustees. Her contributions went beyond the ordinary, however. For example, she edited several “e-books,” as well as 10 print volumes of Careers, a series of autobiographies by practitioners and academics that document the evolution of our specialty over the past three quarters of a century.

In addition, Dr. McGoldrick co-edited two especially large and important publications, The American Society of Anesthesiologists: A Century of Challenges and Progress and Patrick Sim’s Annotated Bibliography of the Rare Book Collection of the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology. The former is a collection of academic papers describing various aspects of the maturation of anesthesiology from a technical operating room service to a medical specialty and a profession. The second publication, Patrick’s annotated bibliography, was an especially long and demanding project. Patrick Sim’s annotations, written over the 30 years he served as librarian of the WLM, described the content and historical significance of the manuscripts, papers, reports and books in the library’s rare book collection. Preparing this material for publication required transforming Mr. Sim’s annotations into colloquial English, organizing his material into sections, and then adding expository material to describe the relevance of the material in each section to the development of our medical specialty. This was a 10-year collaborative effort made difficult by Patrick’s untimely death before the manuscript reached its final stages. Dr. McGoldrick’s work on this project was tireless and essential.

In addition to her committee work, Dr. McGoldrick served three years as vice president of the board and then as president (2001-04). That period was an important time for the WLM as it sought to establish a sound financial footing through development of its endowment, as it increased its holdings of books and artifacts, and as it worked to expand its services to the specialty and the public. Even after
her terms as a trustee and an officer ended in 2004, Dr. McGoldrick continued her work for the WLM. At present, she chairs two very active committees, including Publications, and serves on four others.

The preceding paragraphs describe Dr. McGoldrick's direct contributions to the WLM. Less apparent, but no less important, is another aspect of her service – that as a spokesperson for the history of our specialty, work she has accomplished through publication of original papers and editorials as well as through lectures, reports and presentations. In these may be found a recurrent theme – a description of the evolution of our specialty from a technical service to a medical profession. In some instances, she illustrated this history by describing the life and work of individuals, Nick Greene or Frederic Hewitt, for example. Elsewhere, she described the evolution of characteristics that define anesthesiology as a profession: development of standards of professional behavior and practice, expansion of a knowledge base that underlies good clinical practice and articulation of the concept that our specialty’s goal is service to the greater community.

Dr. McGoldrick carried out all this work for the WLM even as she was involved in many other activities: as chair of the anesthesia department at New York Medical College, as a member of the board of directors of the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research, and as a member of the board of directors of the Anesthesia Foundation and the International Association for Ambulatory Surgery. More recently, Dr. McGoldrick joined the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) to work on that organization’s Clinical Learning Environment Review initiative. All these activities involve education. She has used each to extend the work of the WLM. This, however, describes only a part of her activities.

The mission statement of the WLM reads: “Advance the profession of anesthesiology by preserving and sharing its heritage and knowledge.” No person’s work better exemplifies this goal than that of Dr. McGoldrick. The trustees of the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology are proud to select Dr. Katheryn E. McGoldrick as a recipient of its Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. McGoldrick signs copies of Patrick Sim’s Annotated Bibliography of the Rare book Collection of the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology for Mark Schroeder, M.D., left, and William McNiece, M.D., in 2012.

Trustees celebrated Patrick Sim’s 30th anniversary with the WLM in 2001. From left: Donald Caton, M.D., Dr. McGoldrick, Elliott Miller, M.D., Charles Tandy, M.D., and Patrick Sim, M.L.S