

The American Association of Anatomists Celebrates 125 Years

Congratulations to the American Association of Anatomists (AAA) as they mark their 125th year as an organization in 2013. The 125th anniversary will be celebrated at the 2013 Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. We hope not only members, but friends from around the world will join us. The theme of the 2013 Annual Meeting is the “Many Faces of Anatomy” a title by which we contemplate the many faces past and present who have contributed to and refined the current luster of AAA.

The founding President Joseph Leidy, M.D., LL.D (1823–1891, pictured on cover), served his first term for the American Association of Anatomists in 1888–1889. Leidy was one of the most outstanding American biologists and also a premier representative for American eighteenth and early nineteenth century naturalists (Warren, 1998) whose expertise covered protozoa to humans. He is often referred to as the founder of modern American vertebrate paleontology as well as parasitology. Leidy used microscopy in each of his many fields and is regarded as the first person to use a microscope to solve a murder mystery. Leidy microscopically identified human blood on the clothes and hatchet of a suspected murderer who subsequently confessed to the crime (Hare, 1923). His additional accomplishments included the discovery of more than 100 new species of intestinal parasites and a detailed description of fossils in South Dakota and the first relatively complete dinosaur skeleton from New Jersey.

Though AAA was founded in 1888, the first proceedings of an AAA Annual Meeting were published in 1901 in the first issue of the newly founded *American Journal of Anatomy*. The meeting took place at the University of Chicago over New Years 1901 and consisted of presentations related to anatomy research, studies looking at cells and tissues, and investigations based on various aspects of neuroanatomy. There was only one reference to teaching: “A one-year anatomical course; its arrangement, merits, and disadvantages” by Robert J. Terry, M.D. (1871–1966) who served as professor of anatomy in the Medical Department at Washington University (1900–1909) and later as Head of the Anatomy Department at Washington University Medical

School (1910–1941) in St. Louis, Missouri (Terry, 1901; WUSM, 2009). Terry was not only renowned for his research on human skeletons, but also for his passion as an educator. For more than 40 years, he remained faithful to his vision expressed in 1908: “I wish to share not only in making good physicians, but to add to anatomical knowledge” (WUSM, 2009).

Reading the proceedings of AAA written more than a century ago, it is startling to regard how anatomy educators were facing many of the same issues we face today. In Terry’s 1901 article, he described a newly redesigned anatomy course that had been reduced in length to only one year of training. The number of subjects taught in the first year curriculum had been reduced, while laboratory time in gross anatomy had been increased and now involved concurrent dissections of cadavers with animal organs obtained from the slaughter house. Terry also mentioned the challenge of integrating histology with gross anatomy.

Fast forward to the 63rd Annual Meeting in the spring of 1950 held at Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans, Louisiana. Abstracts from the proceedings demonstrate research topics having expanded to include more physiology and what will become cell biology, clinical anatomy, and neuroscience. The AAA at its 63rd meeting would appear to be keeping up with the times were it not for the shocking absence of abstracts attending to education—not a single abstract in the 63rd Annual Meeting addresses any aspect of education (AAA, 1950).

Jump forward another 50 years to the 113th Annual Meeting in the spring of 2000 held in San Diego, California and not only have the research topics expanded further, but educational presentations are a major component of the daily scientific program (AAA, 2000). The new *Anatomy Education Breakfast Roundtables* became a popular place to grab coffee and have a breakfast with other colleagues teaching the same discipline—a chance to meet new faces. Presentations included talks on variety of topics, ranging from teaching anatomy in allied health programs to improving and innovating new computer assisted learning programs. The faces of anatomy now include educators making significant contributions at the AAA national meeting.

The contribution of educators and teachers has continued and at the upcoming 125th Anniversary Meeting in Boston, April 20–24, 2013, there will be nine sessions devoted to educational topics, including a plenary focus session on the future of anatomical sciences education. In addition to a master class on team-based learning and a refresher course on histology pedagogy, the program features symposia and platform sessions on curricular changes, curricular integration, educational outreach, and teaching innovation.

*Correspondence to: Dr. Richard L. Drake, Cleveland Clinic Lerner, College of Medicine, Cleveland Clinic/NA24, 9500 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH 44195. USA. E-mail: draker@ccf.org or Dr. Wojciech Pawlina, Mayo Medical School, College of Medicine, Mayo Clinic, 200 First Street SW, Rochester, MN 55905. USA. E-mail: pawlina.wojciech@mayo.edu

Received 3 December 2012; Accepted 17 December 2012.

Published online 29 December 2012 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com). DOI 10.1002/ase.1344

Furthermore, AAA's national meetings are now part of a group of societies that come together at the Experimental Biology conference. Through an amalgam of professional associations, AAA members are provided with opportunities to network with a truly integrated group of scientists and educators.

Come join us in Boston for the Many Faces of Anatomy.

Richard L. Drake, Ph.D.*

Cleveland Clinic Lerner

*College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio*

Wojciech Pawlina, M.D.*

Department of Anatomy

Mayo Medical School

College of Medicine

Mayo Clinic

Rochester, Minnesota

LITERATURE CITED

AAA. 1950. American Association of Anatomists. Abstracts of Sixty-Third Annual Session, Louisiana State University School of Medicine, New Orleans, April 5, 6, 7, 1950. *Anat Rec* 106:167–318.

AAA. 2000. American Association of Anatomists. In: Proceedings of the American Association of Anatomists One Hundred Thirteenth Meeting, San Diego, CA, April 15–18, 2000. Bethesda, MD: American Association of Anatomists, 56 p.

Hare HA. 1923. Leidy and his influence on medical science. *J Acad Nat Sci Phila* 75:73–87.

Terry RJ. 1901. A one-year anatomical course; its arrangement, merits, and disadvantages. *Am J Anat* 1:507–508.

Warren L. 1998. Joseph Leidy: The Last Man Who Knew Everything. 1st Ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 320 p.

WUSM. 2009. Washington University School of Medicine. Origins and History of the Washington University School of Medicine: Reorganization & Growth, 1909–1929. Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Missouri. URL: <http://beckerexhibits.wustl.edu/wusm-hist/growth/index.htm> [accessed December 1, 2012].