



Scholarship Created to Honor MTSA Alumna Patty Cornwell

Many dedicated, hard-working individuals leave their imprint on a profession, but few are deserving enough to have both a scholarship and an award established in their honor. MTSA alumna Patty Cornwell ('72) is one of the deserving ones.

Cornwell, a retired CRNA, devoted her professional career to providing exceptional anesthesia care to patients for surgery, labor and delivery, and other surgical procedures, and she devoted her spare time to serving the nurse anesthesia profession she loved. After graduating from MTSA, she joined the AANA in 1972 and the Tennessee Association of Nurse Anesthetists (TANA) in 1976. Throughout her decades of membership, she served on dozens of committees and became passionate about advocating for her profession at the local, state and national levels.

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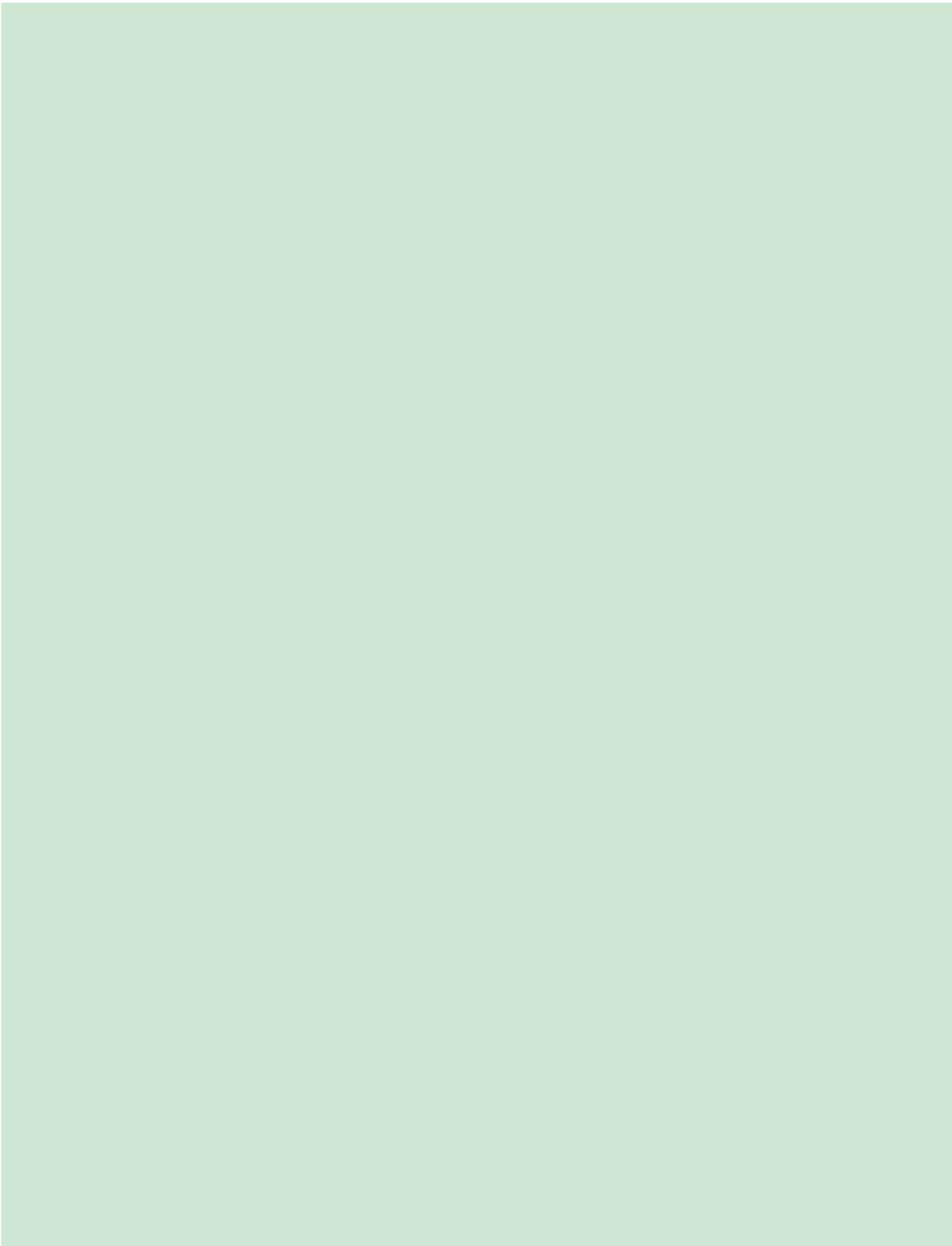
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President's Message

Campus Growth Plans

As we look back at the last year-and-a-half or so, many changes have had to take place – while other projects have been on hold as it relates to the Covid pandemic. However, I am glad to share with you that one of our strategic initiatives is moving forward.

The long-planned Learning Resource Center (LRC) is soon to be more than words, committee planning, and design concepts. The LRC was designed by Earl Swensson Associates (ESa) and following a careful contractor bidding process, we are pleased to announce the awarding of a building contract to PBG Builders, Inc.





In return, Cornwell is being honored by TANA and AANA with the creation of the *Patty Cornwell Stewardship and Advocacy Scholarship*, to be awarded annually to a student nurse anesthetist enrolled in one of Tennessee's nurse anesthesia educational programs. The first scholarship will be awarded this spring. This follows the establishment in 2015 of the *Patty Cornwell Practitioner of the Year Award*, given annually by TANA to a Tennessee CRNA in recognition of Cornwell's exemplary career as a clinician.

"Throughout her career, Patty was a shining example for all nurse anesthetists on how to provide high-quality, compassionate, patient-centered care," said MTSA Chairman of the Board of Trustees and TANA President Vic Martin, MBA, CRNA. "As a dedicated association member, Patty worked tirelessly to strengthen TANA and to advance and protect nurse anesthesia practice. She truly has been a difference-maker for our profession."

"When I was pursuing my degree, my focus was always to just get through school and get a

job," said Cornwell. "I knew nothing about the work of the AANA or state associations at the time. After graduation, I went to work in Florida. That's where two of my colleagues took me to a state meeting for the first time and got me interested in becoming an active member."

After returning home to Tennessee, Cornwell went on to serve on every single TANA committee – including as president three times – and was the organization's executive director, lobbyist, and federal political director at various points during her career. She also served in various capacities for the AANA, the national association representing the nation's nearly 60,000 nurse anesthetists. Much of Cornwell's work focused on ensuring CRNAs' ability to practice to the full scope of their education, training, certification and licensure.

Cornwell emphasizes to new CRNAs that how they introduce themselves to their patients can help raise awareness of the profession.

"Make sure your patients know exactly who you are," she advises. "I always told my patients: 'I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, and I will be providing your anesthesia today.' I left no question or doubt."

"I always encourage CRNAs and students to get involved in their state association and be as

knowledgeable as possible about what is going on around them that can impact their profession and career," she continued. "It's important to pay attention and keep your eyes and ears open at all times."

Source: Tennessee Association of Nurse Anesthetists



