

# From Park Ridge to Schaumburg to the World Wide Web

## *The Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology*

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**T**HE world's largest library, museum, and archives devoted to the history of anesthesia are housed within the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology (WLM), in suburban Chicago. Less than 6 months after WLM Founder Paul Meyer Wood, M.D., had succumbed to a heart attack, his namesake Library-Museum opened formally in November of 1963. The WLM was a library-over-museum two-story building annexed to the one-story American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) Building at 515 Busse Highway, Park Ridge, Illinois. In August of 1992, the WLM moved with its ASA "mother ship" into a three-story building in the backyard of the same extended lot in Park Ridge, at 520 North Northwest Highway. Twenty-two years later, in August of 2014, the new WLM has opened formally just 12 miles away, in Schaumburg, Illinois—for the first time on a plot of land never seen by WLM Founder Paul Wood.

The previous two Park Ridge buildings had basements for storage of undisplayed library-museum items. Galleries in these buildings were designed when economy was paramount, so exhibits were designed to display the maximum number of objects in the most inexpensive manner. The more objects and machines displayed, the less the WLM, and therefore ASA members, would have to pay in climate-controlled off-site storage. Designed by a physician-curator (G.S.B.), these galleries were somewhat cluttered. Professional signage was generated piecemeal with the assistance of a single graphics artist.



***“The WLM is honored to share its treasures with the ASA [, the world of anesthesiology,] and the public as we celebrate our mission to ‘Preserve the Past to Promote the Future.’ ”***

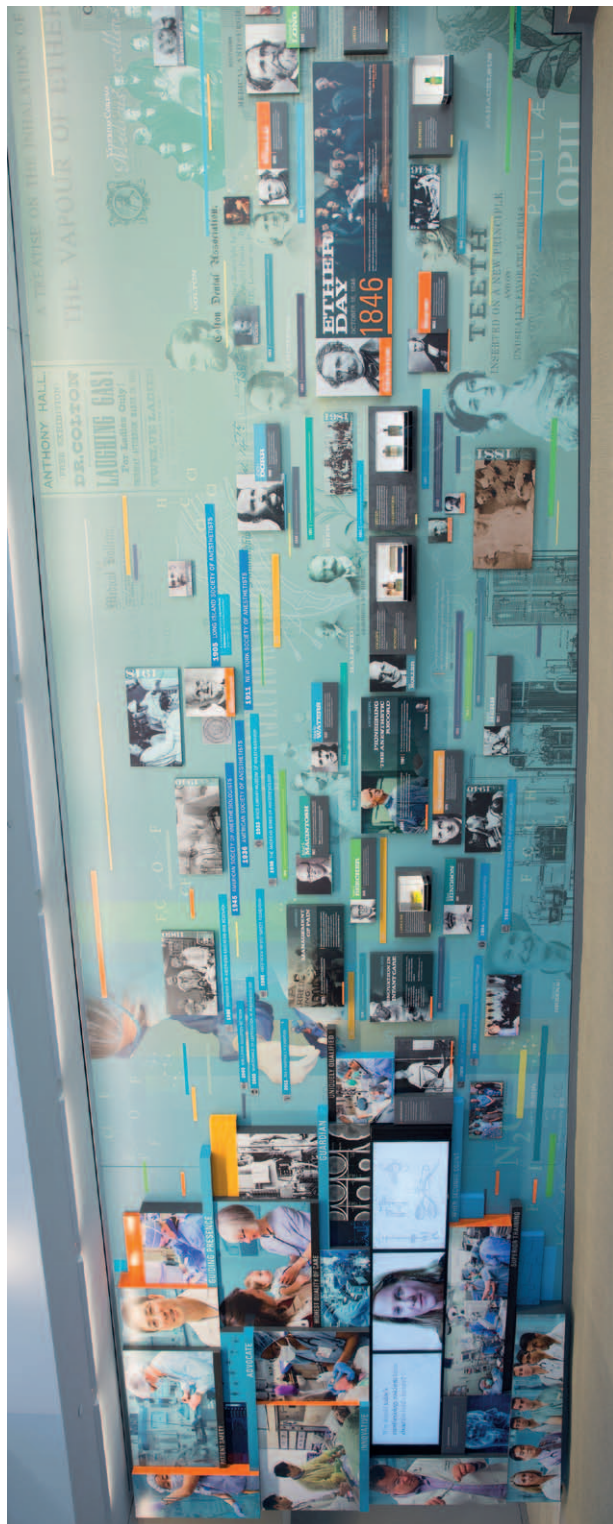
The WLM's in-house project manager was WLM Director Karen R. Bieterman, M.L.I.S. By October of 2012, the authors had joined three WLM Trustees, Charles C. Tandy, M.D., Selma H. Calmes, M.D., and John B. Neeld, Jr., M.D. to “develop a plan for the successful move of the museum, library and rare books to the new ASA Headquarter space.” An ASA Past President, Dr. Neeld was also a member of the ASA Headquarters Building Construction Committee. Later that month, Director Bieterman, WLM Vice President Mark E. Schroeder, M.D., and WLM Museum Committee Chair William L. McNiece, M.D., visited a Louisville, Kentucky,

In January of 2012, then WLM President Mary Ellen Warner, M.D., convened a special “Future Space Planning Meeting” of the WLM Trustees in Chicago. With ASA Past President Eugene Sinclair, M.D., as moderator, the WLM Board unanimously agreed to pledge \$2 million to ensure the WLM significant space in the new ASA Headquarters Building to be built in Schaumburg. The WLM Trustees thereby underscored the importance of displaying the history of our specialty prominently inside our specialty's society headquarters building. This meeting and decision were critical to the rest of the planning and design process to what is now our new WLM space at 1061 American Lane, Schaumburg, Illinois. Because the new ASA Building is a “slab build,” there is no basement area for onsite WLM storage. So, moving to the new ASA Building meant that the WLM had to locate and maintain a large climate-controlled storage annex in Schaumburg.

*Image: Paul M. Wood, M.D., courtesy of the Wood Library-Museum, Schaumburg, Illinois.*

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**Fig. 1.** The Wood Library-Museum's timeline wall of anesthesia history: "From Darkness to Light." Time marches forward from right-to-left along this 55-foot wall. Early use on surgical patients of obtunding or confusing agents such as alcohol, opium, marijuana, or deliriant herbs—use symbolized as darkness—was broken by shafts of light introduced in 1842 by an ether pioneer, Georgia's Crawford Long, M.D., and in 1844 by a nitrous oxide pioneer, dentist Horace Wells. As time moves

forward from right to left, an explosion of light flashed in 1846 after dentist William Morton publicly demonstrated surgical ether anesthesia. News of general anesthesia radiated from Morton's Boston to reach all six populated continents.

That firm composed a 10-page contract for designing, fabricating, and installing WLM exhibits in Schaumburg. The planning phase consisted of an intensive planning session ("Charrette") followed by the "Development of the Interpretive Plan." The design phase consisted of developing and finalizing designs, and then fabricating and installing these as WLM exhibits.

In January of 2013, the intensive planning session was convened. Besides by this article's authors, the Charrette was attended by WLM Archivist Felicia Reilly, M.A.L.S., and four additional WLM Trustees mentioned earlier, Drs. Schroeder, Tandy, McNiece, and Neeld. Past ASA President, Dr. Neeld joined his "Building" Chairman, Steven L. Sween, M.D., in representing the ASA Headquarters Building Construction Committee. ASA representation was reinforced by then Interim CEO Barbara M. Fossum, Ph.D. and Chief Human Resources Officer Karen A. Buehring, M.B.A. Two architectural and four museum design representatives completed the roster of 18 for this brainstorming session.

Qualitatively, the Charrette was the most creative meeting for all stakeholders in planning for a new WLM in the new ASA Headquarters in Schaumburg. Many of the thoughts emerging from the meeting revolved around honoring innovators and innovations in the history of anesthesia. In general, stakeholders opted to honor deceased pioneers, to minimize interdepartmental or geographic rivalries and in order not to be embarrassed by foibles of the living. Innovations were selected in a manner to avoid commercial advertising. Early on, an emphasis on artistic sampling of the WLM's offerings was felt preferable to cluttering too many items into each case or onto each wall.

Quantitatively, both before and after the Charrette, the process was grindingly slow and thorough as the four major architect-designated areas were planned. Visitors to the newly-constructed, 70,000 square foot energy-efficient building will first notice the visually spectacular timeline exhibit "From Darkness to Light." The massive 55-foot sweep is composed of artifacts, images, text, and media that have all been arranged chronologically in a hierarchical format. The historical and organizational context provides viewers with a way to understand important milestone people, places, dates, and developments associated with the anesthesiology profession as we know it today. Conception of the "From Darkness to Light" timeline is credited to WLM President Susan A. Vassallo, M.D. Additionally, the WLM's Honorary Curator for over 27 yr, George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., brought his unparalleled expertise to the project, crafting the exhibit's content and design from early planning to final installation.



**Fig. 2.** The Wood Library-Museum's Legacy Hall Floor Cabinets. In the right foreground is the replica Morton Ether Inhaler. Flanking it are two glass inhalers, the bell-shaped 1846 Hooper and the conical 1847 Charrière, each of which was curatorially

\* Available at: <http://www.woodlibrarymuseum.org/history-of-anesthesia>. Accessed September 9, 2014.

The timeline wall of anesthesia history (fig. 1) went through 37 versions and involved the painstaking selection of 90 historical events. (To interact with the timeline and other gallery images, please link to the WLM's "History of Anesthesia" Web page.\*) For planning purposes, these 90 events were stratified into three groups of 30, each color-highlighted gray, yellow, or green for mildly, moderately, and most important events, respectively. Copyright permissions were obtained for images not in the WLM collections. Unlike ASA Foundations, which found their way onto the timeline, all subspecialty or interest groups for American anesthesiologists were consigned to serial display on flat screens because of the sheer number of groups and their frequency of name changes. Video monitors display "Living History" videotaped vignettes of celebrated anesthesiologists, as well as photoportraits, biographies, and videos of ASA officers, ASA foundation officers, and Past ASA Presidents. The modern end of the timeline highlights ASA's foundations, the "Perioperative Home," and the future of anesthesiology.

The single most challenging display area to design was the second section—the Legacy Hall Wall Cabinets. Here, initial plans called for astonishingly shallow cabinets, thereby severely limiting potential items for display. By default, larger display items were placed in the floor cabinets. After 18 planning versions, Legacy Wall Cabinets were designed around themes focusing on machine manufacturers, neonatal scoring, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and pain medicine.

Perhaps the most variably sized objects populate the Legacy Hall Floor Display Cabinets. Because many modern anesthesia machines are "the size of washing machines on wheels," nearly all of these were consigned to storage offsite and to depiction online. Space constraints and lighting issues also eliminated most large art work from active display, even from these large cases. After 37 versions, Legacy Floor Cabinets (fig. 2) ranged through themes including early inhalers, intraoperative monitoring, general anesthesia, oxygenation, and regional anesthesia.

Taking only 15 versions to plan, the Pioneer Wall Cabinets were the final and easiest area for curatorial design. This area highlighted the ASA's "Member No. 1" A. Frederick Erdmann, M.D., and WLM Founder Paul Wood, M.D. Sadly, space constraints did not allow display of a portable typewriter of the same model used by Founder Paul Wood to take and prepare notes at ASA Annual Meetings. These

**Fig. 2.** (Continued) hand-carried to the WLM from Scotland and France, respectively. The gold-painted plaster statuette served as the model for ether pioneer Crawford Long's marble statue at the U.S. Capitol Building. To the left of the gold-painted plaster model of ether pioneer Crawford Long are glass panes frosted with images of Sir Humphry Davy (*nearest*), then James Gwathmey, M.D., (*middle*), and Samuel Hayes, D.D.S. (*far left*), associated with nitrous oxide analgesia, the 1914 classic tome *Anesthesia*, and the world's first anesthesia journal, respectively.

elegant cabinets showcase Dr. Wood's innovations and inspiring career.

For final submission to the designers, the honorary curator (G.S.B.) collated review comments and corrections—on the timeline and on all three cabinetry zones—from the WLM's Director Bieterman and Archivist Reilly, as well as from Drs. McNiece and Vassallo. Special thanks to part-time Library Assistant Jason Plowman, M.S.A.; to WLM Librarian Teresa Jimenez, M.S.L.I.S. and WLM Museum Registrar Judith Robins, M.A., for all the research they provided; to Senior Library Assistant Margaret Jenkins for countless imaging chores; and to WLM Archivist Reilly and WLM Director Bieterman for fact-checking and revisions. Also thanks to WLM Laureate Douglas R. Bacon, M.D., M.A., for reviewing the Pioneer Wall exhibits, to ASA's Roy Winkler for a critical review, and to ASA's Terri Navarrete for graphics consultations. WLM Treasurer David Waisel, M.D., not only disbursed funds for most of these projects, he was a "final approver," as were the other WLM officers. Note that merely 40% of initially suggested objects ended up displayed due to space constraints or concerns about story line or aesthetics. Professional museum design is clearly a fusion of science and art, so this entire planning and design process was a learning experience for everyone involved.

Regarding our librarian coauthor (K.R.B.), the physician authors of this article salute WLM Director and Head Librarian Karen R. Bieterman, M.L.I.S., for her tireless efforts in marshalling along her Staff and the scores of consultants and physician volunteers who contributed to this immense project. She also supervised imaging for the Rare Book Room wall mural, which highlights text and images of some of the WLM's antiquarian treasures. (The WLM's K. Garth Huston, Sr. Rare Book Room houses more than 2,500 titles, of which 450 have been digitized.) Director Bieterman was painstakingly involved with all the HVAC (heating/ventilation/air conditioning), security, fire suppressant, and rare book room consultants who helped plan the Rare Book Room for Schaumburg. She was in-house coordinator/project manager for the WLM's many other concurrent projects, including (1) *www.WoodLibraryMuseum.org* (WLM web site) expansion, (2) coordinating Schaumburg museum design, (3) library-museum object/book photography, packing, and barcoding, (4) locating and upgrading offsite Schaumburg warehousing, (5) mobile shelving dismantling

and moving, (6) moving of main library stacks and of rare books, (7) moving of Park Ridge offsite storage and onsite basement items to storage in Schaumburg, and (8) moving of display artifacts from Park Ridge to Schaumburg. All of this, of course, she had to coordinate while simultaneously supervising day-to-day reference and support functions supplied by the WLM to ASA members and to the public.

Kudos to Karen R. Bieterman, M.L.I.S., and to her brilliant, dedicated WLM staff: Senior Library Assistant Margaret M. Jenkins; Librarian Teresa D. Jimenez, M.S.L.I.S.; Archivist Felicia A. Reilly, M.A.L.S.; and, of course, Museum Registrar Judith A. Robins, M.A.

In this digital age, more of WLM Trustees' time and treasure will be spent on increasing online access to videotaped interviews ("The John W. Pender Collection of the Living History of Anesthesiology") and to images of the WLM's collections, including its antique apparatus and antiquarian tomes. That way, ASA members, anesthesiologists worldwide, and anyone else interested can all enjoy and study the fascinating history of the only medical specialty founded in America: Anesthesiology! The WLM is honored to share its treasures with the ASA and the public as we celebrate our mission to "Preserve the Past to Promote the Future." Please support the Wood Library-Museum or other similar institutions around the world which preserve the history of anesthesia. For a listing of other anesthesia-related library or museum sites worldwide, please visit the Links Web page.†

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The authors are not supported by, nor maintain any financial interest in, any commercial activity that may be associated with the topic of this article.

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† Available at: [www.WoodLibraryMuseum.org/links](http://www.WoodLibraryMuseum.org/links). Accessed September 9, 2014.