



2014

National Association of Medical Examiners

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Greetings!

Welcome to the 3rd issue of the NAME Foundation Newsletter. The past issues, as always, are available on the NAME Foundation webpage, which exists on the NAME website at www.thename.org. In this issue, we remember, with fondness and admiration, Dr. John Pless, MD, who died in March of this year. During his career as a forensic pathologist, John served as the NAME president and chair of the board of directors. He was also the first chair of the board of trustees for the NAME Foundation, and was always a strong advocate for research and education. Please enjoy the article about John, and consider honoring his commitment to forensic pathology with a donation to the NAME Foundation.

John E. Pless, M.D.

1938-2014



Born in Bedford, IN, in 1938, John E. Pless completed most of his formal education in his home-state of Indiana, receiving an undergraduate and medical degree from Indiana University, and completing an internship and residency

in South Bend, IN. His residency training years included service within the U.S. Army Reserve (Captain), where he spent a dedicated year as a research investigator in clinical pharmacology and toxicology at Edgewood Arsenal Maryland – Army Chemical Center. Following his military service and formal pathology residency training, in 1970, John came to the Oklahoma state medical examiner's office, where he spent a year as a forensic pathology fellow. That same year, he was certified as a Diplomat in Anatomic and Clinical Pathology by the American Board of Pathology (ABP).

The following July, he returned to Indiana and entered the private practice of pathology in Bloomington. John was certified in Forensic Pathology by the ABP in 1972. He was elected coroner, twice, and performed forensic autopsies for the southern part of the state. In 1983, he joined the department of pathology at Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM) as a tenured professor and director of forensic pathology. In short order, he was given the added responsibility of the sophomore pathology course and the pathology residency program. He was appointed associate chairman for education in 1986. His primary

service responsibilities at the time included the jurisdiction of Indianapolis and Marion County. In 1988, because of his interest and talent in teaching, he was awarded the newly established Clyde G. Culbertson Professorship of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, an endowed chair. Education and training were at the forefront of his commitment to our specialty. He was the author of over 30 peer-reviewed manuscripts and several book chapters, oversaw the training of 14 forensic pathology fellows at IUSM, and was instrumental in mentoring numerous medical students, many of whom hold fond memories of the training they received from John.



John was actively involved in many professional societies, including the American Society for Clinical Pathology, the College of American Pathologists, the Indiana



State Medical Association, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), and the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). He was president of NAME from 1997-1998 and chair of the board of the NAME Foundation from 2006-2011. Among the numerous awards that John received during his career, he was the 2005 recipient of the AAFS Pathology/Biology Section Milton Helpert Award, and the 2010 recipient of the NAME George Gantner Award.

Among a range of public service interests, he was a founding member and Chair of the Board of The Villages of Indiana, group and specialized foster homes caring for children. He was a board member of the Friends of Music at the IU School of Music as well as its

president, and chair of its emeritus board. He served for ten years on the dean's council of the IU School of Medicine and as its president from 2000-2002. Another facet of John involved the traditional jazz group, "The Residue", with whom he played piano for 41 years. Some of us had the pleasure of hearing the group when the NAME annual meeting was held in Indianapolis in 2000.



John Pless was the consummate professional. He was gentle, yet strong and confident. He was a true gentleman, and he was a positive role-model for all who came into contact with him, whether professionally, socially, or personally. He was a man of faith, and a wonderful husband, father, and grandfather. He is survived by his wife, Lois, their children and their families, including seven grandchildren.



John was also a role model for the courage he demonstrated for 15 years under the very difficult circumstances of metastatic prostate cancer. As the years passed, and he continued to have the

same optimistic spirit and vitality, it seemed possible that his illness might resolve into something more manageable. Unfortunately, that was not to be. John died on March 17, 2014, at the age of 75 years. John was a strong supporter of NAME and the NAME Foundation, and a valued colleague. He will be greatly missed.

Joseph A. Prahlow, MD
and **James L. Luke, MD**

Silent Auction at NAME Annual Meeting in Portland

The NAME Foundation will again be sponsor-

ing a silent auction in the exhibit area of the NAME Annual Meeting in Portland, OR this coming September. All proceeds from the auction will be added to the Foundation endowment fund, which is utilized to support forensic pathology research, education, and history preservation. Those winning items are able to claim a tax-deduction for any amount paid over the fair-market value of the item, while those donating items are able to deduct the total fair-market value of the donated item. Dr. Jamie Downs is chairing the Silent Auction Committee. He is eagerly anticipating receiving donations from many NAME members. Virtu-

ally anything of value may be donated. Anyone who has authored a book is encouraged to donate a copy to the auction. Artists are encouraged to donate some of their work. Time-shares, vacations, wines, and items of historical or educational forensic interest are among the many popular items that have been auctioned in the past. Please consider donating something this year, for those of you planning to attend this year's meeting, please stop-by the booth and participate in the auction! Please be on the look-out for more information from Jamie and his committee over the next couple of months.

Best Paper Awards

One of the more visible functions of the NAME Foundation is its annual sponsorship of awards presented for "Best Papers" at the NAME Annual Scientific Meeting, including Best Resident (Platform and Poster) and Best Affiliate Paper. Winners of the awards are provided with a financial award, which, in recent years, has been provided by the NAME Foundation. Please be sure to congratulate this year's participants and winners when you see them at the NAME Annual Meeting. In the next newsletter, a previous year's award-winner will be highlighted.

Update on the NAME Foundation Activities

The NAME Foundation Board of Trustees has been having monthly conference calls to discuss and plan various activities and programs. With the overall goals of advocating for forensic pathology research, education, and preservation of history, the leadership of the Foundation has been actively targeting and/or investigating the following as potential ways in which to achieve our goals:

- Increasing individual membership
- Examining the possibility of corporate membership
- Examining the possibility of individual membership for select non-NAME members
- Examining the possibility of partnering with an "advocate," who would provide a positive public image and function in a leadership role regarding fundraising and other duties
- Evaluating possible partnerships with various museums in order to develop and sponsor temporary, permanent, or travelling exhibits related to death investigation and forensic pathology
- Maximizing our resources and investments in a conscientious and fiscally responsible manner
- Developing additional fundraising events and opportunities
- Continuing to support forensic pathology training and research

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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NAME Foundation Membership Criteria

The NAME Foundation is proud to offer membership to any member of the National Association of Medical Examiners who makes an annual contribution to the NAME Foundation. The following minimal annual contribution qualifies membership in the NAME Foundation:

NAME Members: \$50.00

NAME Affiliates: \$20.00



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