

The five founders of the Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society

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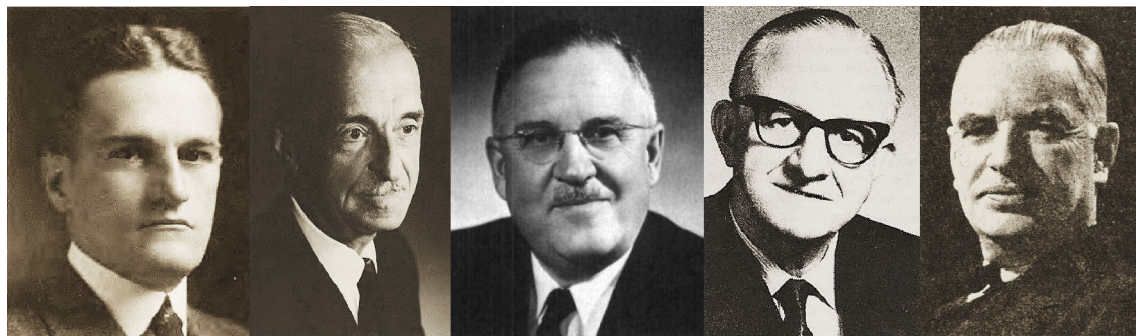
Seventy-five years ago, five members of the “Montréal Society of Anaesthetists” decided to create a new national organization, the Canadian Anaesthetists' Society (CAS).^A

On June 24, 1943, the CAS membership consisted only of its five founders. Dr. Harold Griffith was nominated as the first CAS President,¹ Dr. Roméo Rochette and Dr. Wesley Bourne became Vice-Presidents,² and Dr. Digby Leigh was the Secretary-Treasurer.³ At the second meeting, on October 9, the first CAS Council was created, and Dr. Georges Cousineau⁴ (who eventually became CAS President in 1952) was elected as a Quebec representative with nine other new members representing the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, and the Western Provinces. Membership subsequently grew rapidly. In his 1946 President's report, Dr. Griffith pointed out that “the

Society [was] now recognized as representative of the great majority of Canadian anaesthetists” – with 369 members.

Each of the five founders brought his own strengths to bear on the task of nurturing the new Society. Dr. Bourne was already internationally renowned and had just completed his term as President of the American Society of Anesthesiologists – the only non-American ever to hold the post. Dr. Cousineau, who was working with the famous thoracic surgeon Norman Bethune, was a pioneer of thoracic anesthesia. Dr. Harold Griffith was already famous for many reasons but especially for the introduction of curare in the practice of anesthesia in 1942. Dr. Leigh was considered by many as the “Father of Pediatric Anesthesia” in Canada. Finally, Dr. Rochette, head of anesthesia at the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal,⁵ inspired

75 The Five Founders



Wesley
Bourne

Georges
Cousineau

Harold
Griffith

Digby
Leigh

Roméo
Rochette

Figure The five founders: Wesley Bourne, Georges Cousineau, Harold Griffith, Digby Leigh, and Roméo Rochette

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^A The Canadian Anaesthetists' Society was renamed the Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society in 1999 following a vote at the 1998 Annual Business Meeting.

confidence in all who knew him, and his counsel was greatly respected.

In the final month of this 75th anniversary year, this image and text serves to honor the seminal contributions of these five visionary anesthesiologists who created our national organization.

Conflicts of interest None declared.

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