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History of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons

Many physicians, without formal training, served in neurosurgical units during World War II. The fascination of neurological surgery led many of these young people to seek formal training in neurological surgery after the war. These people were mature beyond their years. However, they were frustrated that they could not join one of the existing neurosurgical societies soon after completing their residencies. Most of the existing neurosurgical societies had limited membership. The Harvey Cushing Society did not open its membership until 1949 and would not consider new members until they were Board Certified. Thus, there was a period of at least three years before a fully trained neurological surgeon could join a national neurosurgical society. Most waited much longer. These frustrated neurological surgeons led by Dr. Bland W. Cannon and Dr. James R. Gay sent letters to approximately 50 neurosurgeons inviting their suggestions about the formation of a new neurosurgical society. This new neurosurgical society was founded on May 11, 1951 when 22 young neurosurgeons met at the Jefferson Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri. The name "Congress of Neurological Surgeons" was selected with care. "American" and "United States" were deliberately not used as the founders wanted the new organization to be international with unlimited membership. These founding principles have continued to the present. The founders established that the Congress would be an association of neurosurgeons organized to study and discuss the principles of neurological surgery, to study developments of scientific fields allied to neurosurgery and to honor living leaders in the field of neurological surgery. Most neurological surgeons at that time were associated with academic centers. The officers of the existing neurosurgical societies were usually senior neurosurgeons who were overburdened with administrative academic responsibilities. These young neurosurgeons decided that younger neurosurgeons might have more time and energy to devote to the administration of the neurosurgical society and decided to limit the age of its officers. That concept has continued and no officer of the Congress can be elected beyond the age of 46. The Congress was already an international organization three months after it was founded with members in five countries by August 1951. The first Annual Meeting of the Congress was held at the Hotel Peabody in Memphis, Tennessee from November 15-17, 1951 with sixty-one members, seventeen guests and nine guest speakers in attendance. The Auxiliary of the Congress was organized at the first Annual Meeting and has continued to play a very important role in the Congress. Many spouses have worked side-by-side with their neurosurgeons in Congress activities and have provided much "free" labor to the Congress. Dr. Elmer C. Schultz was the first President of the Congress, Dr. Carroll A. Brown was the first Vice President and Dr. Bland Cannon was the first Secretary.

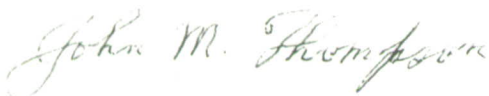
The Congress is primarily concerned with neurosurgical education. World-Class neurosurgeons have been honored at every Annual Meeting since the second Annual Meeting was held at Chicago in November, 1952. Professor Herbert Olivecrona of Sweden was the first honored guest. Many honored guests have come from countries other than the United States. The honored guest is not only honored but traditionally presents three excellent papers during the meeting.

The Executive Committee authorized publication of the Congress Newsletter in February, 1952 and this was initially edited by Dr. Roy A. Tyrer. The Executive Committee authorized publication of Clinical Neurosurgery in November 1953 with Dr. Raymond K. Thompson as the first Editor-in-Chief. A distinctive new Journal Neurosurgery was first published by the Congress in July 1977 with Dr. Robert H. Wilkins as Editor. The

Directory of Neurological Surgeons in United States was authorized in June 1956 under the direction of Dr. John R. Russell, Chairman of the Survey Committee. The Congress published the first World Directory of Neurological Surgeons in 1966 with Dr. George Ablin as Editor. The Congress was the first neurosurgical society to have a Socio-Economics Committee. The Congress was the first to publish a tabulation of the results of a national fee survey. The Congress also was the first to publish Neurosurgical Utilization Guidelines.

The Congress has always been interested in neurosurgical residents and in May, 1957 the Executive Committee authorized the expenditure of Congress funds to help subsidize residents attending the Congress meeting. The Congress urges neurosurgical residents to join as resident members and urges neurosurgeons to apply for active membership as soon as they complete residency training. New members also are urged to volunteer for the many Committees of the Congress and to become actively involved in running the Congress. The large number of volunteers has enabled the Congress to have extremely low dues when compared with other professional organizations of similar size. The Congress dues were only \$25.00 for the first 20 years of the Congress. The dues continue to be very low in spite of the fact that members are provided with Newsletters, Clinical Neurosurgery, Neurosurgery and also Concepts In Neurosurgery when such Volumes are published. The Congress pays half of all Joint Neurosurgical activities which includes the Washington Committee, The Council of State Neurosurgical Societies, The Managed Care Task Force, the Comprehensive Neurosurgical Survey, the Neurosurgical Directory, the Carotid Endoarterectomy Task Force and Neurosurgery On Call. The Congress has no headquarters and only two full time employees because it is run by massive volunteer efforts. The Congress is a model for professional organizations in times of contracting resources.

The Congress has enjoyed phenomenal growth in the 46 years since it was founded. It now has over 4,000 members who practice in at least 63 countries. We welcome all well trained neurosurgeons with high personal and professional ethics from all parts of the world. At the present time we have members in every continent except Antarctica.



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