

Refurbishing a Rusty Cystoscope into the Retrospectroscope Award

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Introduction: The AUA Earl Nation Retrospectroscope Award is presented annually for the best presentation and paper at the annual History Forum. The award, bestowed by voting members of the AUA History Committee, includes a personalized and refurbished Brown-Buerger cystoscope and an AUA honorarium. The history of this prestigious award itself, however, is not widely known. Our objective was to identify the persons, vision, and processes required to establish the award and continue its tradition as a highlight of the annual meeting of the AUA.

Sources and Methods: We reviewed contemporaneous documents including AUA Board of Directors' Meeting items, AUA archives, History Committee minutes, and notes by the AUA museum curators. Original newspaper archives were obtained as cited from digital resources. Secondary publications regarding the founding of the AUA History Club, the History of Urology Forum, its creators, and the award itself were obtained from the AUA Archives or from on-line resources as indicated.

Results: The annual History Forum at the American Urologic Association national meeting has been held annually since 1975, modelled after the smaller history meetings moderated by Earl Nation and Frank Bicknell since 1965. The development of an award for the top history paper was proposed at the 2005 meeting and formally approved by the AUA Board of Directors in 2006. During this time the AUA Museum had collected numerous ACMI Brown-Buerger cystoscopes from urologists who were switching to fiberoptic instruments. The Retrospectroscope Award, later named after 1977 AUA President Earl Nation, thus came into existence whereby the winning History Forum presenter would be given one of the donated cystoscopes and a small honorarium. The first Retrospectroscope winner was Shamim Baker for her 2005 paper on the Tuskegee experiment. The prize has been awarded annually for the past 19 years, eventually coming under AUA sponsorship in 2014.

Conclusions: The History of Urology Club at the AUA began in 1965 but an award for the best presentation has only been awarded since 2006. The AUA website lists prior award winners. The History of Urology Forum has significantly increased in popularity from the original 5 presentations in 1965 to 21 podium presentations in 2022 with 14 posters, a keynote "Bicknell Oration", and a Medical Ethics Debate. As competition for the AUA Earl Nation Retrospectroscope Award has increased, contenders must submit a completed manuscript in addition to their presentation.

Keywords: Earl Nation, Frank Bicknell, American Urologic Association History Forum



he first meeting of The American Urological Association (AUA) was held in Saratoga Springs, New York in 1902, organized and led by the AUA's founder, its first President Ramon Guiteras (1858-1917). The Presidential Address continues to be an annual tradition and even then President Guiteras knew that his words would set the tone and scope of what the fledgling organization of the AUA might eventually become. "I feel that I am performing the role of the speaker of the prologue in ancient plays," he said to attendees on a warm, June day with showers in the forecast.(1,2)

"...To precede the actual performance by a statement of the plot or argument of the play... I will therefore in the present instance adapt my prologue to the program of this meeting by reviewing briefly the history of urology from its first steps to the more recent advances that have served to develop this important branch of medicine and surgery and to bring it to its present stage of evolution."(1)

His address, the longest of any President's at the annual meeting, spoke for the importance of history

to the urologic practitioner and for the importance of subsequent organizers to include history in the annual meeting.(3) The AUA supports several awards, bestowed by peers annually to reflect exemplary service, contributions, career development, leadership, and intellect. Among these is the AUA's Retrospectroscope Award given to the individual with the best talk at the AUA History Forum and full length manuscript. The development of the Retrospectroscope Award, however, has not been fully recognized nor its originators credited. Our aim was to explore how the award was initially proposed, developed, and now granted as a highlight of the annual meeting.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Literature regarding the background of the Forum on the History of Urology and AUA Earl Nation Retrospectroscope Award was obtained from the William P. Didusch Center for Urologic History (Linthicum, Maryland). Additional documents included AUA archives of e-mails and notes of former AUA curator Rainer Engel, Board of Directors' (BOD) meeting documents, and secondary resources as indicated. Images were obtained from the Didusch library as cited. Historical newspapers were obtained from microfiche from the Empire State Library Network and their archives at nyshistoricnewspapers.org. Personal interviews were conducted as cited.

RESULTS

The History of Urology Club

The first History of Urology Club met at the 1965 AUA Annual Meeting in the Roosevelt Hotel, New Orleans. The Club was originally conceived by Elmer Belt (1893-1980) and Frank B. Bicknell (1907-1999), the latter having already co-founded the Society for Pediatric Urology (Figure 1). The inaugural meeting lasted 2 hours so as to include five papers (Figure 2).(4,5) Two talks were presented by descendants of their chosen subject: A biography of Hugh Hampton Young (HHY) was discussed by his son, HHY Jr., who was visiting from Los Angeles, and a John Draper spoke on the pioneering contribution of his famous ancestor with the same name, a 19th century urologist. Francis Twinem of New York discussed the origins of the AUA itself and Ronnie Bush, also of New York, reviewed the history of urology in the 1700s. The Club established its international appeal by having as speaker Professor Luis Sanjurjo, who had established the Puerto Rico Urological Association in 1949 and the first urology residency training program in Puerto Rico in the 1950s. Bicknell went on to chair the Club for a decade. In his honor, an annual invited lectureship was established in 2000 and named The Bicknell History of Urology Oration.(4)

Elmer Belt played a pivotal role in the creation of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Medicine and became a pioneer in gender-affirming

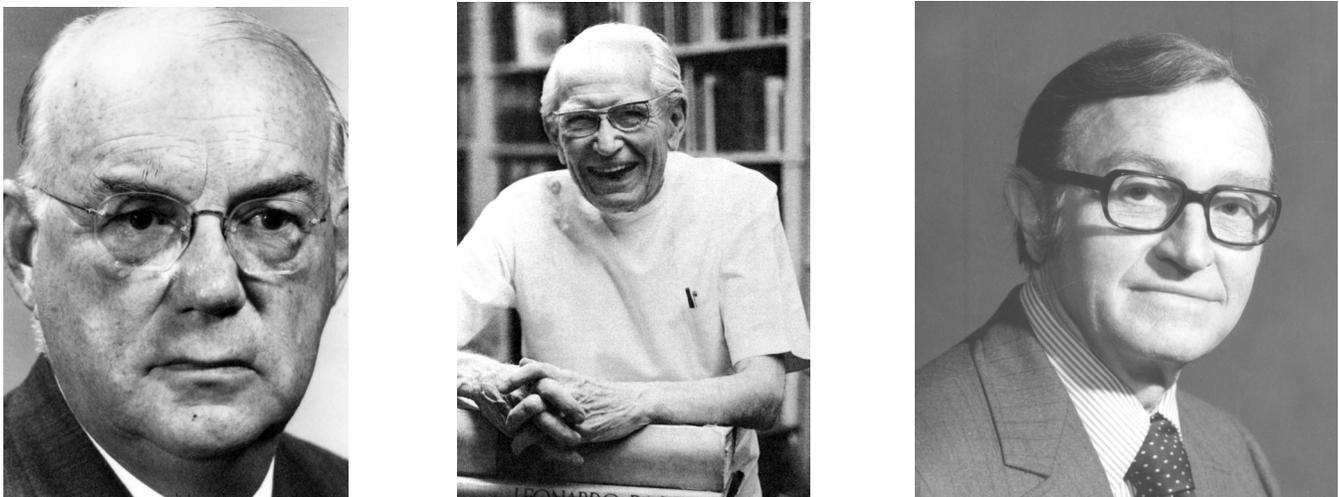


Figure 1. Frank Bicknell (1907-1999) (left) and Elmer Belt (1893-1980) (middle) were internationally recognized pioneers in their field before conceiving of the concept of a special meeting at the AUA entirely dedicated to the history of urology, Now recognized as the History of Urology Forum, its annual Retrospectroscope Award is named after Earl Nation (1910-2008) (right), 1977 AUA President, life long urologic historian and who himself spoke at the 1975 history meeting. (Images courtesy of the William P. Didusch Center of Urologic History, Linthicum, Md)

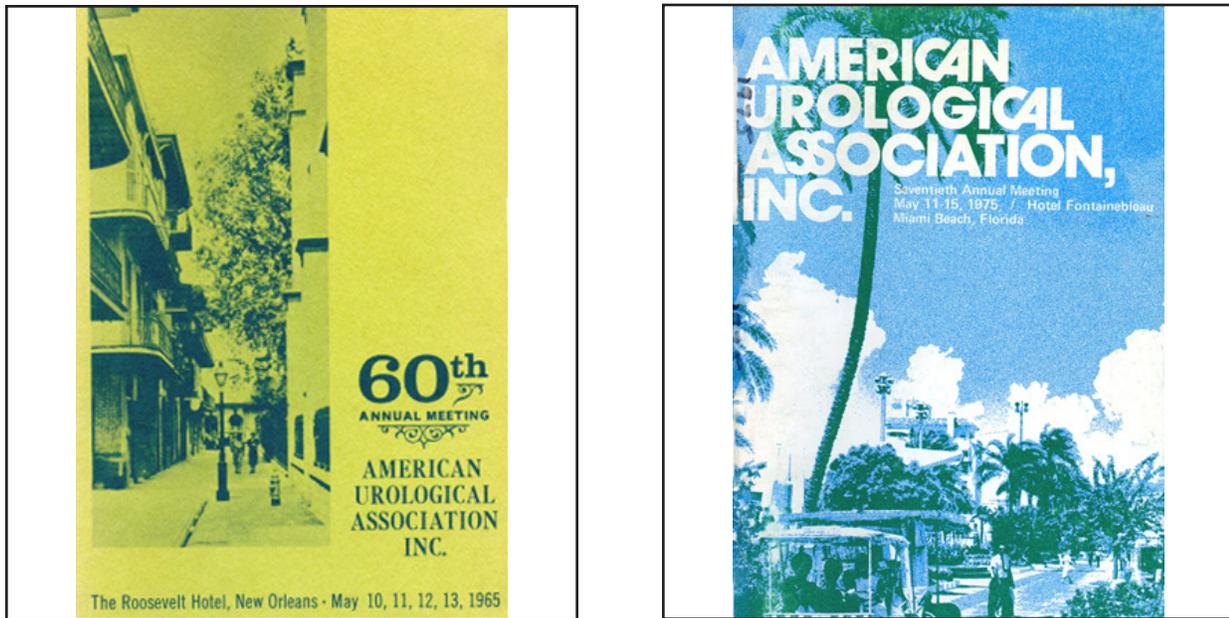


Figure 2. The 1965 (left) and 1975 (right) AUA program books where the first meetings of the History of Urology Club and the Urology History Forum were held. (Images provided by American Urological Association (AUA) archives, Didusch Museum)

surgery, possibly being the first surgeon to perform gender affirming surgery on a regular basis in the United States. He was an avid book collector and had a particular interest in Leonardo da Vinci. His collection of original works by the great master has been regarded as the largest in the United States and was eventually donated to UCLA in 1961 as the Elmer Belt Library of Vinciana, eventually integrated into UCLA's Library Special Collections.(5)

As the History of Urology Club grew in popularity, it became the Forum on the History of Urology at the 1975 annual AUA meeting in Miami held at the famous, but at that time, nearly bankrupt Hotel Fontainebleu (Figure 2). Bicknell still chaired the meeting but he now co-moderated with AUA historian Ralph R. Landes (1911-1989, who served as historian 1965 -1980), publisher of the comprehensive historical treatise *Perspectives in Urology, Vol I.*(6) A total of 3/5 (60%) of papers at the Miami meeting were by New Yorkers but on varied topics including biographies on the English surgeon Percival Potts (1714-1788) and on 1942 AUA President Oswald Lowsley (1885-1955). A history of the cold knife punch was given by Earl Nation (1910-2008), who would serve as President of the AUA itself in 1977.

The Forum on the History of Urology continued to grow. In 1978, 11 papers were presented, increasing to 15 in 1991. In 1999, a total of 20/50 abstracts were selected for presentation, an acceptance rate of 40%. By

2023, 36/115 (31%) abstracts were accepted including 21 for a podium presentation and 14 for the growing poster gallery.

A Need for Recognition

During the 2005 AUA meeting in San Antonio, Shamim Baker, a research coordinator at the Urological Sciences Research Foundation (Los Angeles), gave the presentation "Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male. A Closure Comes to the Tuskegee Study".(7) The Tuskegee Study was an observational trial in rural Alabama with an aim to understand the natural history of untreated syphilis, as there were no effective therapies for syphilis when the study began. The study was originally designed to last 6-8 months but continued from 1932 through 1972. The effective treatment of syphilis, even by a single injection of penicillin, was demonstrated in 1947. The Tuskegee researchers, however, withheld penicillin from a large proportion of men who had treatable, early stage syphilis without their consent.(8) Such controversies were eventually revealed and led to congressional action that ensured protections for those participating in research and ethical and medical standards by which all research must be conducted. Baker's presentation was considered "stunning" by Forum directors and led to an effort to recognize the Forum's best presentations.(9)



Figure 3. Photograph taken at the AUA Museum in Baltimore in 2001 of AUA Curator Rainer Engel (left) with New York urologist John R Herman admiring the vast number and iterations of cystoscopes in the museum at that time. Herman's book *Urology: View through the Retrospectroscope* served as the inspiration for the name of the Earl Nation Retrospectroscope Award.(11) (Images courtesy of the William P. Didusch Center of Urologic History)

The Award and Its Name

The AUA history curator, Rainer Engel (1933-2018, curatorship 1993-2016), worked to bring the concept of a History Forum award to material fruition (Figure 3).(9) He had a detailed knowledge of the enormous inventory and archives of the AUA museum and was responsible for bringing the museum to its current status as a world class repository. Engel recalled that the AUA had received many donated Brown-Buerger cystoscopes from urologists who had been transitioning to more modern, fiberoptic instruments. He recognized that the Brown-Buerger cystoscope was the original 'workhorse' of urology with a significant history due to the sheer volume of scopes that still existed. Prior to the Brown-Buerger scope, many of the original cystoscopes were not practical to use as they often broke and needed to be sent to Germany for servicing. Reinhold Wappler (1870-1932) established a new business in 1900 to address the unmet need of rapidly servicing cystoscopes by creating the Wappler Electric Corporation in New York. Tilden Brown (1853-1910) worked with Bausch & Lomb (Rochester, New York) and Wappler to develop a lens system that created a larger field of vision and likely the first double-catheterizing cystoscope. Leo Buerger

(1879-1943) also worked with Wappler to design a cystoscope that allowed for different sheaths, lenses, and an obturator which gave urologists the ability to find and treat a variety of GU conditions. The 'Brown-Buerger' cystoscope was thereby created and named as a recognition of the significant contributions by both men in its development. Wappler eventually merged his companies into the American Cystoscope Makers, Incorporated (ACMI) in 1904 and produced the Brown-Buerger cystoscope on a large scale. The Brown-Buerger cystoscope was the first widely adopted cystoscope manufactured and serviced in the United States and served as the urologists' primary instrument until fiber optics made this scope obsolete.(13) Engel felt, therefore, that a Brown-Buerger cystoscope would be a fitting and ideal annual award for the best presentation at the AUA History Forum (Figure 4).(9)

New awards, though, also require a name. As Engel wrote in a 2006 discussion,

"... the History Committee of the AUA endeavored to create a new role for these old instruments [Brown-Buerger cystoscopes]. At one of our meetings, we discussed the possibility to give one as a prize for the best presentation at the annual

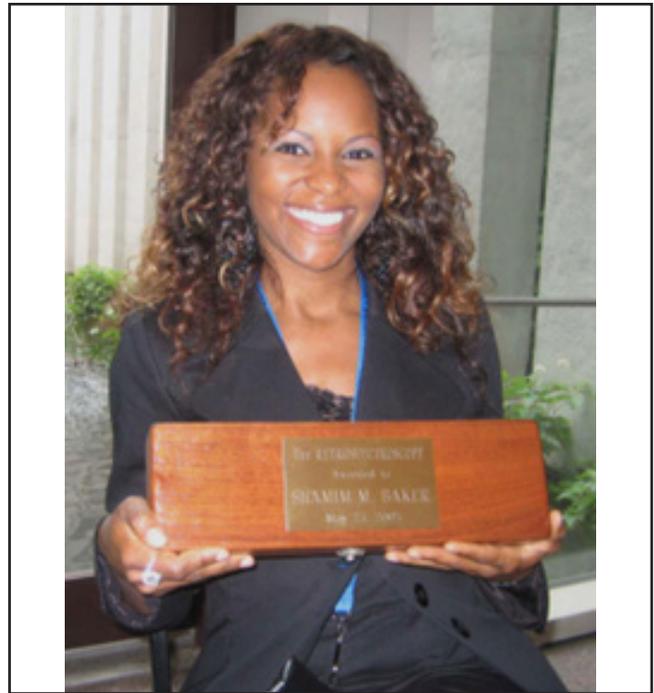


Figure 4. (Left) A refurbished Brown-Buerger cystoscope given to the winning History Forum presentation and paper, along with an honorarium, as the Earl Nation Retrospectroscope award. The particular instrument at top left was the 2022 award to Shreeya Popat bestowed at the Chicago AUA in 2023. (Right) The first Retrospectroscope award winner, Shamim M. Baker for her presentation "Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male" A Closure Comes to the Tuskegee Study" given at the 2005 AUA meeting in San Antonio. (Images courtesy of the William P. Didusch Center of Urologic History)

History Forum; Dan Dietrick (Mid-Atlantic Section Historian) came up with a catchy name for the award: 'The Rusty Cystoscope', in contrast to the 'Gold Cystoscope' [Ed: an award already established by the AUA for significant contributions by a Urologist within 10 years of graduation]. The task of finding support for such a 'prestigious' named award fell to me. Since ACMI had produced all these cystoscopes, they were the obvious choice, and I started to investigate this possibility. Meeting with some of the top people of the company at a reception at San Antonio, I felt our request would fall on fertile ground.

"About a month later, during a reception celebrating the return of our annual exhibit from San Antonio back to AUA Headquarters in Baltimore, I met with ACMI's manager of medical education, Tracey Sanford. Very receptive to the project of such an award, she (not surprisingly) did not think our (working) title of 'The Rusty Cystoscope' would fly too well. Sure enough, it was rejected by ACMI as too 'tarnished'. And then our own Tupper Stevens came up with the solution as we looked at some old booklets in our hands. The museum (owned) numerous copies of a beautiful, small booklet on some of urology's history,

written by John Herman, MD, who was a urologist in NY (Figures 3 and 5). He called it *Urology. A View through the Retrospectroscope*. The first printing was quickly sold out and ACMI reprinted it." (9)

Engel made the decision that the best history presentation would therefore win the refurbished cystoscope, "so beautiful it looks new", a copy of Herman's book, a \$1000 honorarium from Gyrus/ACMI, and it would be called the Retrospectroscope Award.(6) After 2014, the honorarium was bestowed by the AUA. A 2006 e-mail from ACMI manager of Medical Education, Tracey Sanford, to Engel showed the enthusiasm for the new award at ACMI:

'I am thrilled with the name ...suggested for the award. Yes, no name could be better suited in light of Dr. Herman's book...and ACMI's past support of the book's publication. I have shared it with Sandra Tilden, our VP of Marketing and she is pleased with the title.'(10)

In 2006, the AUA Board of Directors approved The Retrospectroscope Award.(11) The spirit of the award was to create a recognition of how new techniques, instruments,

basic science, and changes in thinking have influenced the field of urology. At the 2006 AUA meeting in Atlanta, the first AUA Retrospectroscope award was presented to Baker for her 2005 Tuskegee paper during the Forum on the History of Urology (Figure 4). The tradition of bestowing the Retrospectroscope award at the following year's meeting was thus established.

The award underwent one additional name change in 2008, becoming the AUA Earl Nation Retrospectroscope Award.(12) Nation, who served as 1977 AUA President, was thereby recognized for his life-long passion for medical history and his over 100 articles on the subject (See Figure 1). He was co-founder of the American Osler Society, an organization dedicated to medical history and Oslerian principles which is still very active today.(13) Nation received the Ramon Guiteras Award in 2002 for his outstanding contributions to the art and science of urology.(14)

CONCLUSIONS

The AUA Earl Nation Retrospectroscope Award is now bestowed each year for the best presentation, either podium or poster, and submitted full length manuscript from the previous year's History of Urology Forum, as judged by the AUA History of Urology Committee. The Award was established in 2005 with both AUA and industry support and includes a personalized and refurbished Brown-Buerger cystoscope and an honorarium. The award is a reflection of the high quality work provided to the AUA community at the forum and the popularity of urologic history as an important component of the practicing urologist.

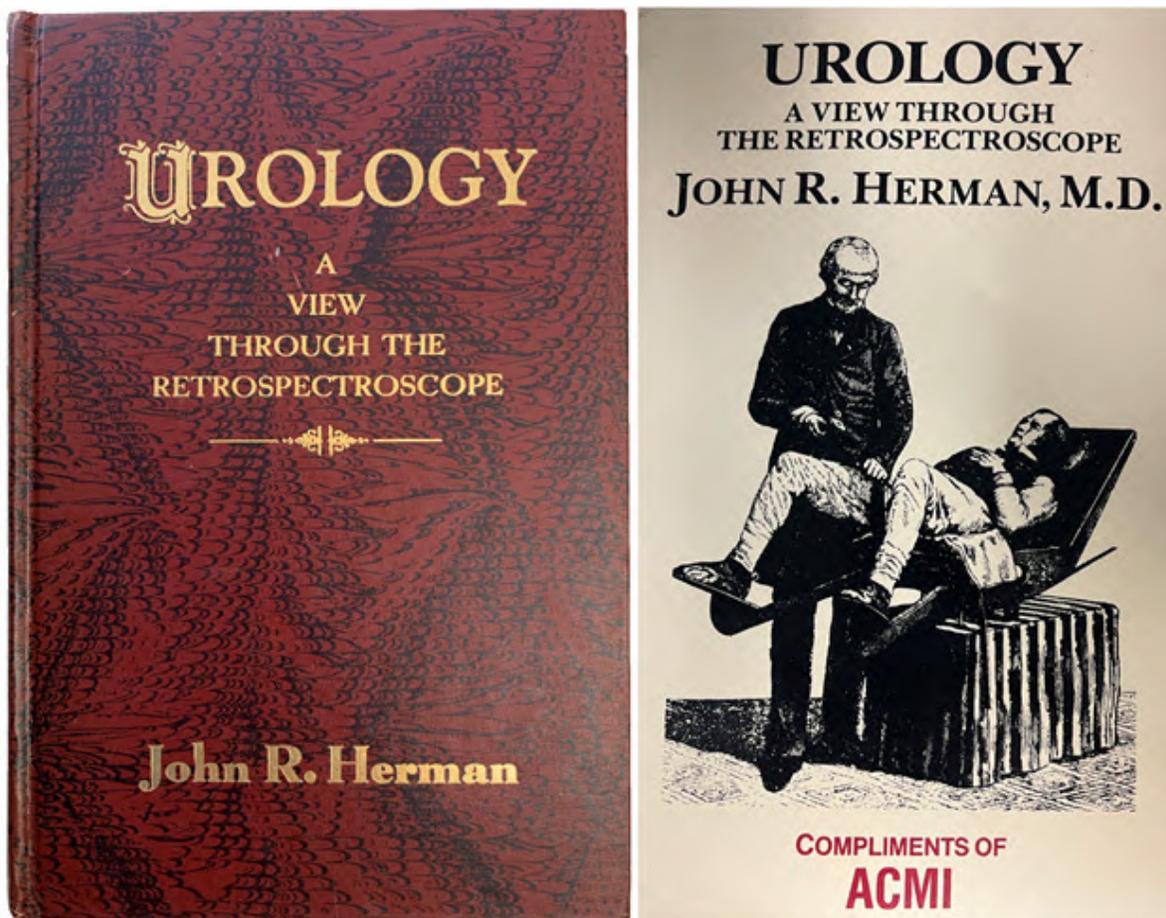


Figure 5. Book covers of *Urology; a View through the Retrospectroscope*. by JR Herman with the first edition cover on the left and the reprint version sponsored by Gyrus-ACMI on the right. Images courtesy of the William P. Didusch Center of Urologic History.(15)

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