

## AARC Named Lectures and the Backstory

Named or honor lectures are common in many medical societies and typically are presented at annual meetings. To be invited to present a named lecture is an honor because it represents recognition of academic accomplishments and service to the profession. At present, the AARC Congress includes 3 named lectures, each focused on an aspect of the profession. This issue of the Journal includes manuscripts generated from named lectures presented at AARC Congress 2020 LIVE! event that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a brief description of the people for whom the lectures are named.

The first and most prestigious named lecture is the Donald F Egan Scientific Memorial Lecture, first presented in 1974. The speaker for the Egan Lecture is generally considered an authority on the topic and has demonstrated a long and productive academic career. The speaker for the Egan Lecture is expected to provide a state-of-the-art review of a given topic and to provide a modicum of wisdom regarding the issues. The Egan Lecture is named for Donald Egan MD. Egan is best remembered for writing one of the early respiratory care textbooks, "Fundamentals of Inhalation Therapy," in 1969.<sup>1</sup> At the time, he was Director of Chest Diseases at New Britain General Hospital in Connecticut, Associate Professor of Medicine at Yale University, and former director of the School of Inhalation Therapy at New Haven Hospital (Fig. 1).

Egan was an early supporter of the respiratory care profession and wrote a number of papers describing the importance of what would become the modern practice of respiratory therapy.<sup>2-5</sup> Of note, in his 1975 paper in *Chest*, Egan wrote<sup>2</sup>:

Respiratory therapy has been something of a phenomenon in modern medicine. Its use in the care of both acutely and chronically ill patients by technical personnel with less than standard medical or nursing training represents a significant and innovative modification of traditional medicine, as an effort to meet contemporary health care needs. The technology was fostered

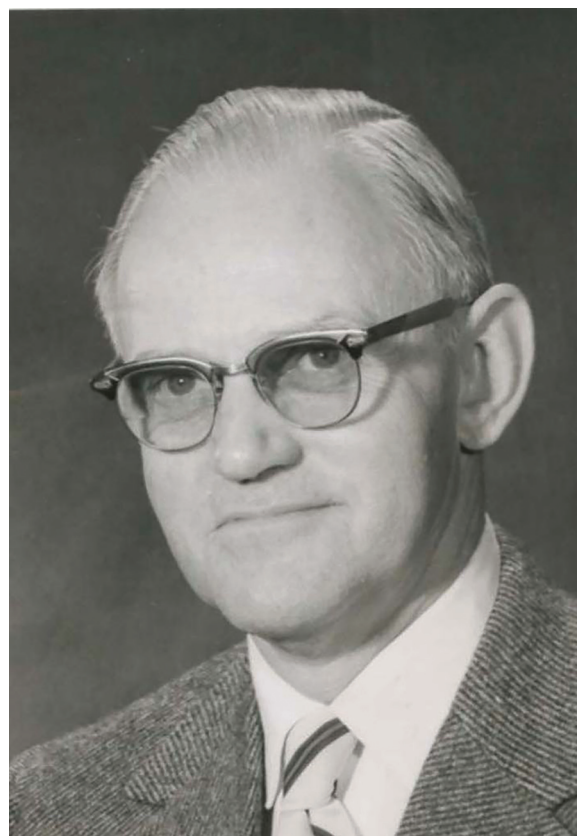


Fig. 1. Donald F Egan.

by a relatively small number of physicians interested in new approaches to diagnosis and treatment of pulmonary disorders, but the speed with which demands for its services grew, especially over the past dozen years or so, is testimony enough that it satisfied a strong and widespread need.

The Egan textbook is in its 11th edition and, for the last several editions, has been edited by an ensemble led by Bob Kacmarek. Bob's contributions to the profession are well known and were recently chronicled by Hess in last month's issue of *RESPIRATORY CARE*.<sup>6</sup> Beginning at the 2021 AARC Congress, the Egan Lecture will be re-named the Robert M Kacmarek Lecture, and rightfully so. The lecture will remain the premiere lecture at the AARC Congress. This month's Journal includes the written version of last year's Egan Lecture by Hess on Evidence-Based Respiratory Care, and it represents the quintessential Egan Lecture.<sup>7</sup>

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Fig. 2. Thomas L Petty.

The Thomas L Petty Memorial Lecture is named for Dr Tom Petty, another legend in respiratory care circles (Fig. 2). Along with being a co-author on the first paper to define ARDS,<sup>8</sup> Petty is considered the father of home oxygen therapy.<sup>9,10</sup> Petty spent a long and productive career at the University of Colorado, where he trained some of the future leaders in pulmonary medicine and respiratory care, including one former Editor of this Journal, David J Pierson, who presented the first Petty Lecture in 2013. For all of his academic accomplishments, Dr Petty may be best remembered for his efforts to educate patients and their caregivers with respect to home oxygen therapy. The AARC launched a web site (Ask Dr Tom) where Petty answered questions from caregivers and patients alike about their disease and treatments. He also wrote a book about his experiences with patients and with his own illness entitled, “From Both Ends of the Stethoscope.”

The Petty Lecture typically focuses on an aspect of care and management of patients with COPD, although Petty’s accomplishments ran the gamut from ICU to rehabilitation and home care. It is not an exaggeration to say that Petty was a giant in his field and a promulgator of proper respiratory care and respiratory therapists. The invited speaker is typically nearing the precipice of their career,

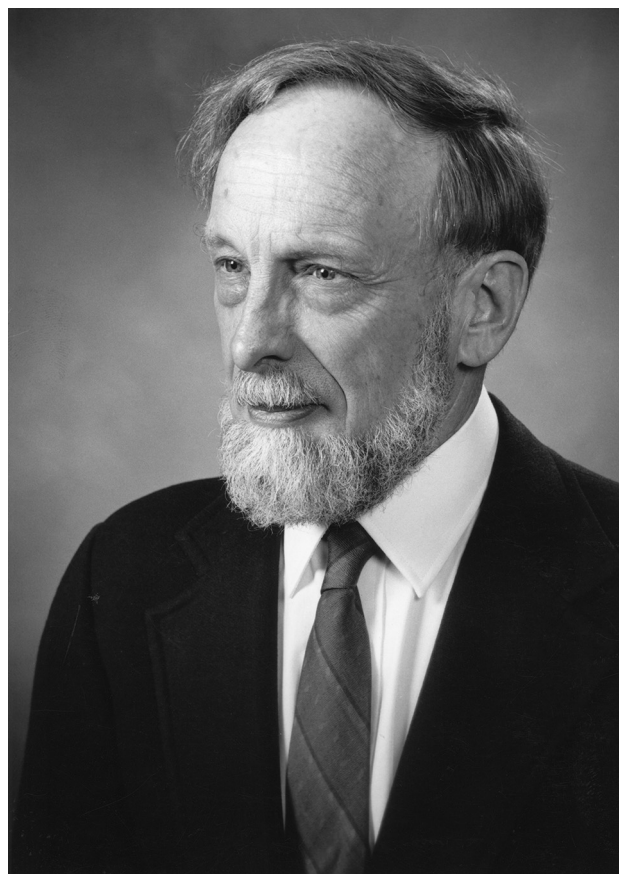


Fig. 3. Philip Kittredge.

being a recognized expert. In this month’s issue, Dr Robert Owens provides the written version of his Petty Lecture, entitled, “Long-Term Domiciliary Noninvasive Ventilation for COPD.”<sup>11</sup>

Since its onset in 1983, the Program Committee Lecture was given by a rising star in the profession on a topic of ongoing investigation. The lecture became the Philip Kittredge Memorial Lecture in 1987. Phil Kittredge was a respiratory therapist and Editor of *RESPIRATORY CARE* from 1968 to 1986 (Fig. 3). Phil mentored many young therapist authors, including the last four Editors of the Journal.

Phil was quiet and unassuming with a New England sensibility, editing the Journal from his office in Connecticut. During his time as Editor, all manuscripts were mailed in triplicate to his office, including blinded copies for review. Phil went to extraordinary lengths to assist aspiring authors in having their ideas published. He challenged authors and wasn’t afraid to bruise egos. Papers were often returned covered in red ink. At the same time, he exhibited remarkably quick thinking on his feet and had a wry, subtle sense of humor. At Editorial Board meetings, he was often the center of attention as he told stories.

Phil's contributions to the Journal cannot be overstated. In those lean years when there were few therapists doing research, he kept the ship afloat with his hard work and dedication to aspiring authors. Having the presenter of the Kittredge Lecture be an individual climbing the ranks of the profession would sit well with Phil. Last year's lecture, Noninvasive Respiratory Support, by Thomas Piraino RRT, is an excellent choice. Piraino's paper is included in this month's issue as well.<sup>12</sup>

This is by no means an exhaustive history of the individuals for whom these honor lectures are named, but it provides some insight into the history of the profession and the accomplishments of the individuals honored yearly at Congress, for those who care to think about such things.

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