CORRESPONDENCE

Richard von Foregger Worked Closely with a Nurse Anesthetist

To the Editor—Richard Foregger's account of his father's life and work left out an important working relationship. Richard von Foregger worked closely with Helen Lamb, C.R.N.A., a pioneer nurse anesthetist. For more than 20 years, Lamb collaborated with von Foregger on anesthesia machinery designed at Barnes Hospital, in St. Louis, Missouri.2 Historian Marianne Bankert analyzed Lamb's personal papers and correspondence with von Foregger.3 Bankert described their affiliation as an "ambiguous relationship." Lamb, whose efforts to communicate on a professional level with Arthur Guedel and Ralph Waters were rejected (Guedel offered her only "a good chat in my backyard"), turned to von Foregger for help. von Foregger served as Lamb's interlocutor, taking her scientific questions to the physicians and returning with word of their anti-nurse anesthetist activities. When von Foregger advertised machinery in the first edition of ANESTHESIOLOGY, he omitted mention of Lamb's contribution to his work for "reasons that need no explanation." Richard von Foregger described his father's professional relations with physicians as the "overriding essence of his life." Bankert's research suggests that von Foregger, who was a Ph.D. and not an M.D., apparently set himself apart from his physician associates, to some extent.

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References

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Yes, I left many out of the biography; I could not mention everyone. Sorry!

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