

Past President Interview:

David Sumrall interviewing Bob Marino in his home, NEED DATE

Dr. Sumrall: Good morning, I'm Dr. David Sumrall. I am the assistant Chair of Anesthesiology at Ochsner Health in New Orleans and I have the honor to be in the home of one of my mentors and someone who started the Society of Cardiovascular Anesthesiologists, Dr. Robert (Bob) Marino. He is my good friend and like I said a mentor so I look forward to chatting with you a little bit about how this all got started and we appreciate you hosting us and allowing us to join you in your home.

Dr Marino: It's great to have you here, it's an honor actually.

Dr. Sumrall: Wonderful - thank you Dr. Bob and I hope it's OK if I'll call you Dr. Bob that's all I've ever really known you as.

Dr. Marino: OK that's fine.

Dr. Sumrall: One of the things I think a lot of us would like to know is how did you become interested in anesthesia? What drew you there? Any people that influenced you?

Dr. Marino: Oh that's kind of an easy question because I was given the opportunity to work with Jim Arens one summer and he was such a good teacher and mentor that he got me very excited. I originally was interested in going to do plastic surgery and after being with Jim, it was no doubt, I wanted to go into anesthesia. He was very just very influential on me

Dr. Sumrall: Well, Dr. Arens certainly is someone I know and I was honored to know through his connections with you all, and I'm sure he played a large role in your interest in cardiac anesthesia as well.

Dr. Marino: He did, he sent me to Texas heart where I met Dr. Keats and Slogoff and they were such good cardiac anesthesiologists that's kind of where I decided I wanted to specialize

Dr. Sumrall: Well that's wonderful, that really segways in nicely to the unique thing about you as you were the first president of the of the society and that's obviously a huge honor to you and for the society as well, specifically though, what was your interest in starting the SCA? What was the driving force behind that decision?

Dr. Marino Well, we tried to join the Association of Cardiac Anesthesiologists (ACA), which was the cardiac group mostly based out of Boston with a few other people in it which was a small group, and they didn't want to expand so we said well why don't we get together with anybody, you know - open a new society to anybody interested at all in cardiac anesthesia, and so that's how we decided to go.

Dr. Sumrall That's wonderful. Who did you collaborate with initially? Who are some of the other people that helped found this organization?

Dr. Marino Well, one of the main partners was George Burgess. He and his wife who was a lawyer helped with a lot of the background organizational stuff. Whereas my input was mostly with my connections to other cardiac anesthesiologists, so they were very influential in putting together the structure of the society.

Dr. Sumrall: From idea to that first meeting, can you give us a little bit of a timeline how long that was and what were some of the challenges that you all faced?

Dr. Marino Well it was about a year, and some of the challenges were trying to get support from well known anesthesiologists and cardiac anesthesiologists, and have them spread the word that it was a good thing to do. Then we just had to set up a meeting in downtown New Orleans, which you know has got its own complications.

Dr. Sumrall So, the first meeting was in New Orleans. It was in November and I have the agenda here in front of me for November 16th and 17th, 1979 at the Royal Sonesta. Can you give me a little bit of background on how you all developed that first agenda and any challenges to getting people to present?

Dr. Marino: Well, actually there were some challenges. Everybody, however, was eager to help so it wasn't a challenge of getting people to present, and people that I knew and who knew other people within in cardiac anesthesia helped get it going including participation in the meeting.

Dr. Sumrall One of the things you mentioned earlier was some of the other organizations as a driving force behind starting SCA. Did you experience any resistance from those organizations or other departments or other anesthesia groups?

Dr. Marino No, the ACA actually encouraged us to form this organization because they wanted to stay small and didn't want us to, you know, make that organization gigantic. They wanted a small close group to discuss cardiac anesthesia.

Dr. Sumrall: So obviously you were very involved in all the planning to get these things going. What was the process of how you were selected as the first president? Do you remember that at all?

Dr. Marino: I think it just kind of happened because I was the one who pushed the meeting. But I did try to “dump” it on somebody else!

Dr. Sumrall I did notice in the first action item after the registration and welcome to the meeting was election of new officers.

Dr. Marino That’s correct - well it was two things about that, number one was you know I wanted to just make it an open group and get other participants involved early, so that was the main reason we had elections at the first agenda item. In addition, I had done a lot of work and I was ready to give it up.

Dr. Sumrall: You mentioned openness several times already and I know in preparing for this you and I talked a lot about the openness and how important that was to have access to knowledge. One of the items that we talked about was a discussion that you all had in some early board meetings about forming a journal or not. Can you give us a little background on that and why you chose not to?

Dr. Marino: Yeah sure, there was a certain group of people on the board (and in the society) that wanted to have their own journal. After talking with some of my mentors I decided it would be best to have us publish in a major journal, which eventually resulted in our going with Anesthesia and Analgesia. The majority of us thought this would enable a lot of people to learn and participate in Cardiac anesthesia.

Dr. Sumrall: That's truly a lasting legacy which sounds like you set the tone for early on.

Dr. Marino Yeah, I think It’s an important tone.

Dr. Sumrall: How was the SCA received by other anesthesiologists and by other departments around the country?

Dr. Marino: Very well. They were all excited about it because you know the ACA was very closed and not many people. Nobody could get in (due to their membership number policy) and really we had a lot of support even from ACA members to get this going so it was very easy and we had a lot of supporters.

Dr. Sumrall: You mentioned to me in our prep work for this that some of the things you enjoyed most about your role, and your wife Betsy enjoyed as well, were the friendships that you made. These were enabled through the midyear board meetings, and you mentioned having these meetings at very popular destinations was a big help. Tell us a little bit about that.

Dr. Marino: Well, you know one the ways you can attract people to meetings is to have the meetings at fun places, so we really went out of our way to make sure that all of our meetings were in fun places for people to go to like Kiawah Island you mentioned.

Dr. Sumrall: What are you most proud of about your legacy here and about what you know about the society today?

Dr. Marino: Well, I think the openness of the society would be the thing that I wanted the most, and this did happen and I think it's still the case.

Dr. Sumrall: And then as far as current leadership, the current SCA, what advice would you have for them?

Dr. Marino: I'll just tell them to keep it open as it is now, that would be my main thing. In addition continue to have good, interesting meetings, and to distribute the information as much as possible to everybody.

Dr. Sumrall: Dr. Marino thank you for your time today. It was an honor to get to speak to you as someone who is a mentor for me. Someone who taught me so much as I was one of your residents and, then my trying to fill the big shoes you left in the department. I know I speak for the entire SCA as well the community of anesthesiologist and the Ochsner Department of Anesthesiology in thanking you for your leadership and your foresight in helping to develop this crucial piece for our specialty.

Dr. Marino: Well that's very nice for you to say that. I'm honored that you're here and the society in Ochsner is what it is today.

Dr. Sumrall: Thank you, sir.