

Past Apgar Recipients

1975 Clement A. Smith, MD
1976 Richard L. Day, MD
1977 Donald H. Barron, PhD
1978 Nicholas S. Assali, MD
1979 William A. Silverman, MD
1980 Geoffrey S. Dawes, FRS MD
1981 Louis K. Diamond, MD
1982 Lula O Lubchenco, MD
1983 Edward Hon. MD
1984 Giacomo Meschia, MD
1985 L. Stanley James, MD
1986 Graham C. Liggins, MD, ChB
1987 Mildred T. Stahlman, MD
1988 Murdina M. Desmond, MD
1989 William H. Tooley, MD
1990 Petter Karlberg, MD
1991 Mary Ellen Avery, MD
1992 L. Joseph Butterfield, MD
1993 Jerrold F. Lucey, MD
1994 John A. Clements, MD
1995 William Oh, MD
1996 Frederick C. Battaglia, MD
1997 Maria Delivoria-Papadopoulos, MD
1998 Kurt Benirschke, MD
1999 Joan Hodgman, MD
2000 Robert H. Usher, MD
2001 Philip Sunshine, MD
2002 Avroy Fanaroff, MD
2003 Eduardo H. Bancalari, MD
2004 Tetsuro Fujiwara, MD
2005 Stanley Graven, MD
2006 David K. Stevenson, MD
2007 M. Jeffrey Maisels, MD
2008 John Kattwinkel, MD
2009 John C. Sinclair, MD
2010 William Keenan, MD
2011 Alan H. Jobe, MD, PhD
2012 Waldemar A. Carlo, MD, FAAP
2013 George Gregory, MD
2014 Jon Tyson, MD, MPH
2015 Jeffrey A. Whitsett, MD
2016 George A. Little, MD
2017 Richard J. Martin, MD
2018 Saroj Saigal, MD
2019 Barbara Schmidt, MD, MSc, CM

The Virginia Apgar Award in Neonatal Medicine

Awarded in Recognition of Outstanding Contributions to Perinatal Medicine

Barbara Schmidt, MD, MSc, CM

For continuing contribution to the well-being of newborn babies in the United States and the world

Section on Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine
National Conference & Exhibition

Saturday, October 26, 2019
New Orleans, LA

"The Virginia Apgar Award is given annually by the Section on Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine of the American Academy of Pediatrics to an individual whose career has had a continual influence on the well-being of newborn infants."



The Virginia Apgar Award is made possible by an continuing grant from Abbott Nutrition.

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Virginia Apgar, MD



Though not a pediatrician, Dr. Virginia Apgar influenced pediatrics as have physicians. All are familiar with the Apgar Score, which first allowed statistical comparisons among resuscitative techniques for the newborn infant and forced attention to their needs in the delivery room as at least competitive with those of the mother. But few are aware that Dr. Apgar was among the very first to catheterize the umbilical artery, and fewer still realize that her life of 65 years spanned three professional careers—surgery, obstetric anesthesiology, and public health. The first she deserted in order to found the second, which led her into the third through her interest in birth defects.

Born in Westfield, New Jersey, Dr. Apgar was educated at Mr. Holyoke College and despite the practice of discouraging women in the field at the time, entered a prestigious surgical residency following her graduation from Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1933. This, however, was short-lived and she became the first physician of either sex to enter the field of anesthesia at Columbia in 1935. Within three years, she was appointed full professor (the first woman so recognized) and later, Director of the Division of Anesthesiology. In the process, her research and teaching helped to develop the entire field of anesthesiology into a scientific medical specialty, deserving of the full-time attention of physicians especially knowledgeable in neuropharmacology and cardiopulmonary physiology.

These considerations perhaps led her to become interested in the effects of anesthesia upon the fetus and newborn to the extent that, in 1949, she relinquished the Directorship of Anesthesiology to establish the field of obstetrical anesthesia through her full-time devotion to it, as marked by development and establishment of the Apgar Score. This completed, she left the field in the capable hands of many of her former students to join the National Foundation of the March of Dimes, after earning the MPH degree at Johns Hopkins in 1959.

During the next 14 years until her death in 1974, Dr. Apgar led the National Foundation's effort in structural and nonstructural birth defects, following the conquest of polio, and encouraged the Foundation's developing interest in perinatal problems. These efforts, aided by Dr. Apgar's enduring and endearing talents as gadfly and diplomat, have largely been responsible for the converging interests of obstetricians and pediatricians in mounting cooperative assaults upon perinatal morbidity and mortality.

This remarkable record was achieved by a multitalented human being whose ebullience encompassed participant sports (including aviation in her later years) and whose special love was playing chamber music with friends, as well as crafting four of the instruments upon which they played. The AAP Perinatal Section purchased her violins, viola and cello, which she constructed under the tutelage of Carleen Mayley Hutchings and donated them to the College of P&S in 1996 as The Apgar Memorial String Quartet. Her love of stringed instruments was expressed as Secretary/Treasurer of the Catgut Acoustical Society. Her energy was such that everything was accelerated. With determination softened by tact, and humility leavened with humor, she was ideally equipped for her several missionary roles. Her religion was idealistic rather than spiritual and her chief goal was to satisfy her own curiosity rather than to impose her views. But her enthusiasm was a lifelong student inevitably reinforced the power of her teaching and devotion of many students to whom she always remained friend and counselor.

Those students and their colleagues in the American Academy of Pediatrics find it most fitting to establish in her memory the Virginia Apgar Award for distinguished contributions to perinatal medicine.

Barbara Schmidt, MD, MSc, CM



The Virginia Apgar Award represents the highest honor that our section bestows to individual whose cumulative career accomplishments have had a profound and continuing influence on the well-being of neonates. Barbara Schmidt is the 2019 Virginia Apgar Award recipient. Dr. Schmidt is an internationally recognized neonatologist and clinical epidemiologist with a long and productive career in perinatal and neonatal research. Her contributions have improved healthcare of neonates worldwide and she has an extensive history of exemplary mentorship.

Barbara Schmidt has designed and completed large international trials that are some of the best trials in neonatology in design, execution and performance, including the Indomethacin Prophylaxis and Patent Ductus Arteriosus Management (TIPP) trial, Caffeine Therapy for Apnea of Prematurity (CAP) trial, and the Oxygen Saturation Targeting in Extremely Preterm Infants (COT) trial. These trials have changed the perceptions of the neonatal community about trial quality and evidence-based patient management. The trials are remarkable for their virtually complete capture of patients for primary outcomes that include two-year follow-up. TIPP trial is one of the first in neonatology with a neurodevelopmental outcome rather than short-term outcomes. The CAP trial has received well-deserved attention and praise since the first results were published 13 years ago. In 2008, the CAP trial was selected for the Inaugural Trial of the Year Award by the Society of Clinical Trials and Project Impact. As a result of this work, Dr. Schmidt has been invited to speak about neonatal caffeine therapy in 25 countries around the world.

Dr. Schmidt and her colleagues were first to examine the prognostic effect of combinations of three neonatal morbidities (severe ROP, BPD, brain injury) on long-term outcomes. Using data from the TIPP and CAP trials, they found that these morbidities contributed similarly and independently of each other to the prediction of the infant's status at 18 months. This allowed them to develop a simple predictive model based solely on the number of morbidities that are present at or soon after a post-menstrual age of 36 weeks. The morbidity count prediction model can be used to counsel parents and to identify infants at the highest risk of childhood disability. This is an example of how Barbara has worked with her collaborators to mine trial data to make important clinical observations.

Dr. Schmidt has also been the center of PI for University of Pennsylvania and CHOP in the NICHD Neonatal Research Network and has served as center PI and the PI for the Data Center for the NHLBI-funded Prematurity and Respiratory Outcomes Project (PROP) to evaluate lung outcomes in very preterm infants at seven academic centers. Her leadership to keep PROP focused and productive was essential. She also effectively used this project to develop junior neonatal colleagues at CHOP to great advantage.

Barbara Schmidt has been a research mentor and thesis supervisor for neonatal fellows and MSc students in clinical epidemiology for the past 25 years. She has also built a sizable team of local colleagues and junior investigators at CHOP who are enthusiastic about their participation in clinical research. Over the course of her career, she has been the clinical research mentor and supervisor for more than a dozen neonatology fellows and young faculty. Most of her trainees are academic neonatologists.

Barbara Schmidt has been a consummate clinical scientist, epidemiologist, and mentor whose contributions to the advancement of knowledge in the care of premature neonates are enormous. She is the thought-leader for clinical trials in neonatology. Her work has advanced the field of neonatology and has led to an improved evidence base in neonatology internationally.

Dr. Schmidt will be presented with the 2019 Virginia Apgar Award at the Section on Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine Program at the AAP NCE on Saturday, October 26, 2019 in New Orleans, LA.

Alan H. Jobe