

THE DWIGHT PARKINSON GAVEL

OF THE

WESTERN NEUROSIRGOCAL SOCIETY

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Professional societies, like families, often have traditions and transferable legacies over time among its leaders. For example the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, originally named The Harvey Cushing Society by its founders, annually transferred the Cushing Cigarette Box to its current president. In September 1979, the honored guest of the Western Neurosurgical Society was Dwight Parkinson, MD, Head, Department of Neurosurgery, The University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Doctor Parkinson on that occasion presented then WNS President Donald B. Freshwater MD with a gavel and base plate he carved on a lathe from oak wood rescued from the Royal College of Surgeons Building in Ottawa, the capital of Canada. This Parkinson Gavel was subsequently transferred to thirty incoming Presidents of the WNS annually at the Formal Banquet over the years 1979-2010. Because of usage and wear the gavel required total refinishing in 2001. In 2010 our highly respected WNS President and friend, Doctor L. Philip Carter, succumbed midyear from malignancy, and the Parkinson Gavel was lost before passing to his successor.

Doctor Parkinson was the original skull base neurosurgeon. After meticulous anatomical studies he performed direct closure of carotid-cavernous fistulas under circulatory bypass and hypothermia through the eponymous Parkinson triangle at the base of the brain. This triangular area of approach is formed above by cranial nerves 3 and 4, below by cranial nerves 5 (ophthalmic division) and 6, posteriorly by the edge of the tentorium. At the 1979 Western Annual Meeting he delivered papers on *Intraoperative Serial Angiography, Medical Contributions of a Non-Medical* *Genius and Concussion*. In the latter paper he demonstrated that despite multiple severe concussions well documented on movies he projected, famous heavyweight fighters subsequently enjoyed notable carriers in business pursuits, in distinct contrast with contemporary understanding of the damaging effects of multiple concussions and post-traumatic encephalopathy.

That Western Annual Meeting in Scottsdale Arizona had another exceptional memory. In the room adjacent to the meeting site the national meeting of Amway salespersons was being held, characterized by vociferous chanting which overpowered and interrupted Western speakers, including Dwight Parkinson. Despite these perturbations Doctor Parkinson conferred upon the Society three excellent papers and a treasured gavel he skillfully created and which endured over three decades.