

2024 AANA Alice Magaw Outstanding Clinical Practitioner Award
Lisa Lucas, DNP, CRNA

I would like to start by saying I am both honored and humbled to receive the Alice Magaw Outstanding Clinical Practitioner Award. This award gives tribute to CRNAs involved in clinical care who have made important contributions to the advancement of nurse anesthesia practice.

Thank you to the AANA Board of Directors for the selection. Thank you to my colleagues, former USAGPAN residents, and especially the Association of VA Nurse Anesthetists (AVANA) for their nominations, as well as choosing me to be the 2023 inaugural VA CRNA of the year. Although VA CRNAs are small in numbers, we are mighty because AVANA works tirelessly to represent us.

On a personal note, I am at an age where I am starting to reflect on things like my life/career choices. What many do not know is that my career started as a scrub tech. My first day on the job, I met an anesthesiologist that saw potential and believed in me. His encouragement put me on the path to this very moment. I am so thankful for him and for my mother. While he gave me my goal, she raised me to be proactive and to make the most of all opportunities.

Fast forward a few years and as a nurse anesthesia resident, I rotated to the Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Memphis. There I met Dr. Susan Calhoun, the Chief of Anesthesiology, and the one to fuel my passion for thoracic anesthesia.

She and Dr. Eugene Mangiante, the Chief of Surgery, not only taught me direct patient care but also how to lead. They allowed me to hand pick an exceptional team of CRNAs and develop my roles as then Lead CRNA and USAGPAN phase II program director, and now Chief CRNA for Memphis and Chief CRNA consultant for all of VISN 9. Although both are since retired, Dr. Calhoun and Dr. Mangiante remain my lifelong friends and mentors.

In closing, I want to encourage each of you to seize your chance and find a place to work where your worth is recognized, and where you are empowered as a change agent for safe patient care.

Thank you to the entire Lt. Col. Luke J. Weathers, JR. VAMC executive leadership and Quality Management teams for their support. They continue to give us, as CRNAs, the freedom and resources to provide exceptional veteran centered care.