**2024 AANA Program Director of the Year Award Acceptance Speech**
**Aimee L. Badeaux, PhD, CRNA, APRN, CNE**


I am humbled to have been selected as the 2024 recipient of the Program Director of the Year Award. I would like to thank the AANA Board of Directors for bestowing this incredible honor upon me while thanking Susan Steele-Moses for the nomination.

This award is a significant milestone in a journey that has been filled with growth, learning, and impact. The work of a program director is driven by a desire to make a difference, to contribute to our field, and to positively impact nurse anesthesia education. I am here today as a program director and award recipient because of the countless individuals who have shaped my journey - the mentors who guided me, the colleagues who supported me, and the family who stood by me every step of the way. I am deeply thankful to everyone who has been a part of this journey.

I would like to thank my mentor, Phyllis Pedersen, for giving me the opportunity to teach and to lead. Phyllis gave me the courage to leave the operating room full time for the classroom and then challenged me to lead as an assistant program director and eventually as a program director.

I would like to thank Dana Clawson and my colleagues at Northwestern State University of Louisiana for taking a chance on me to create and build a nurse anesthesia educational program during a pandemic. I also would like to thank my colleagues for their expertise, dedication, and passion, as each one of them has been instrumental in our achievements.

I am eternally grateful to every student nurse anesthetist who has allowed me to be a part of their educational journey. Thank you for entrusting your education to me. It is a privilege and honor to serve students and I cannot think of a more fulfilling calling.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support, encouragement, and unwavering faith in me. To my husband Brian, my son, Benjamin, and my daughter, Elizabeth, you are my why and I love each of you.