

BARBARA K. HORTON RECOGNIZED AS DISTINGUISHED HONOREE OF THE TECHNOLOGIST SECTION

"Legislative and credentialing issues are so central to the work of the Technologist Section of The Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) that it's hard to imagine just 10 years ago we had no policy on licensure and no legislative network," said Barbara K. Horton, CNMT, former executive director of the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB). Mrs. Horton, who was a founding member of the certifying board, was designated as a Distinguished Honoree of the Technologist Section at the 34th SNM Annual Meeting, held last June in Toronto, Canada.

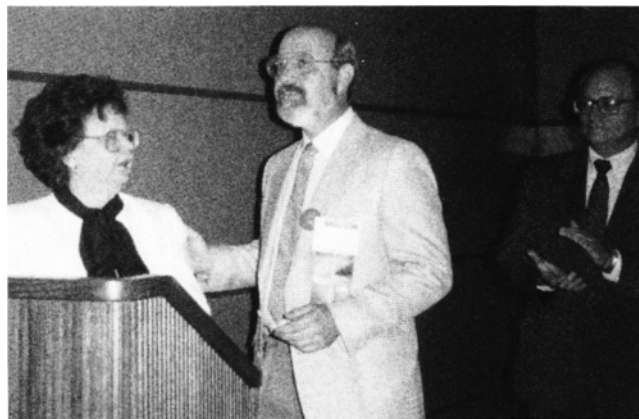
"Barbara worked endlessly for both the Technologist Section and the NMTCB," said Susan C. Weiss, CNMT, who introduced Mrs. Horton at the award ceremony. "None of us could keep up with her—she's sort of a whirlwind—and the amount of devotion she gave is incredible."

Active in Technologist Section activities for over 15 years, Mrs. Horton has served as secretary/historian of the Section, National Council delegate, and president of the Technologist Section of the SNM Southeastern Chapter. When accepting her plaque, however, she emphasized her conviction that "the success of any project or organization is not based on one person, but many. Nor is the success of a person his or hers alone. The contributions that any of us make are the result of our combined experience, our commitments, the people who have touched our lives, and a little bit of luck."

After training at the University of Alabama Medical Center Veterans Administration Hospital in Birmingham, AL, where she was the first nuclear medicine technology student, Mrs. Horton moved to Georgia in 1970. In Macon, she helped set up the nuclear medicine department at the Coliseum Park Hospital, which was then a new hospital. From 1971 to 1978 she worked at DeKalb General Hospital in Atlanta, first as staff technologist and later as chief technologist and director of education.

"I started becoming involved in professional societies in 1972," said Mrs. Horton. "The first thing I ever did was serve on the Licensure Committee of the Georgia Society of Radiologic Technologists." She went on to help organize the Georgia Society of Nuclear Medicine Technologists, serving as its first president, and worked to form the Georgia chapter of the American Society of Allied Health Professions. Mrs. Horton was also the first technologist to be appointed to the Georgia Medical Advisory Committee, which serves the state government of Georgia.

In 1976, when the Technologist Section National Council created a task force to investigate a possible certification process, under the auspices of the Section, nuclear medicine technologists were already being certified through the



Shown at the Technologist Section June 1987 business meeting, from left to right, are Barbara K. Horton, CNMT, Wayne J. Wcislo, CNMT, immediate past president, and Bob Horton.
(Courtesy of Mary Keenan)

American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) and the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP). "The main problem, though, was that there was no avenue for nuclear medicine technologists to be on the governing boards of those organizations," said Mrs. Horton.

Many technologists were taking both the ARRT and the ASCP examinations to be able to practice *in vivo* as well as *in vitro* nuclear medicine technology. A credential that indicated competence in the entire scope of practice was needed. Nuclear medicine technologists wanted to develop their own standards for certification and establish a professional identity separate from other allied-health professions.

The task force laid the ground work for the NMTCB in the fall of 1976, reviewing proposals from testing agencies, estimating costs, writing bylaws, and developing a task analysis of entry-level practice. In January 1977, the National Council endorsed the establishment of the NMTCB, and the SNM Board of Trustees appropriated funds for the new certifying board. The National Council also elected the task force members—Violet C. Custer, Joan L. Herbst, CNMT, Barbara K. Horton, CNMT, James J. Kellner, CNMT, James K. Langan, CNMT, Anthony Mazzola, Mark I. Muilenberg, CNMT, Susan Schlegel, CNMT, and Susan C. Weiss, CNMT—to be the NMTCB's first directors. Donald R. Bernier, CNMT, James J. Conway, MD, and Frances N. Kontzen, CNMT were elected as directors in March 1977.

During its first year the NMTCB received staff support from the SNM Central Office. "One of our goals, though, was to

be independent as soon as possible," said Mrs. Horton. With the success of the first exam, taken by 652 candidates, a separate office with full-time staff seemed feasible. As Ms. Weiss recalled, "When the NMTCB needed an executive director and was on a miniscule budget, Barbara gave up her job, became our director, and moved the NMTCB into her home. And not only did Barbara work for the Board, but her husband, Bob, gave endlessly and tirelessly."

"The overwhelming support from the nuclear medicine community was a key factor in the NMTCB's success," commented Mrs. Horton. In retrospect, she believes that the NMTCB was successful because it operated like an excellent company, following the principles of dedication, hard work, and "esprit de corps," that are essential to any successful business. "Our product was our exam, and we spent most of our resources developing it. It was the dedication to the quality of the examination, to developing an exam most reflective of current practice, that was instrumental to the NMTCB's success." Although the Board recognized that its two competitors, the ARRT and ASCP, had been in business a long time, "we concentrated on developing the best exam, not worrying about the political climate," added Mrs. Horton.

The NMTCB encourages participation in certification issues from a broad base of nuclear medicine professionals. Any SNM member can submit nominations for NMTCB directors, and any qualified individual can be nominated. Item writing also provides an avenue for grass-roots involvement. Barbara Horton would like her tenure as NMTCB executive director to be remembered as testimony to what any person can give his or her professional organization. Accepting her Distinguished Honoree award, she said:

"I was not a high-profiled technologist from a prestigious university or large hospital. I never published a scientific paper. I was a practicing technologist from a 400-bed community hospital whose practice was geared toward 'bread and butter' procedures. . . . As a practicing technologist that you single out today, it is my sincere wish that this honor will always be a reminder that committed service and contributions can come from any member, regardless of background, and that it will underscore the obligation of leadership to identify these willing people, encourage them, and provide the opportunities to them to become active in the Section. Who knows where it will lead?"

Betsy Hanson