

Association Award

Dr Olivera Potparic



It gives me great pleasure to write a citation for Olivera Potparic in recognition of her huge contribution to the Association of Anaesthetists' SAS Committee. Olivera has been Chair of the SAS Committee since 2013, and whilst much is known about her achievements as Chair, less is known about her professional life. To begin my citation I'd like to tell you a bit about Olivera.

Olivera qualified in medicine from the University of Belgrade and it was there that she took up her appointment as a Consultant in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care. In 1991, she was invited by the late Professor Stanley Feldman (himself an Association Honorary Member) to come and work as a Senior Registrar at the old Westminster Hospital. With such a great mentor, and teacher, it is hardly surprising that Olivera decided to stay. As Yugoslavia was a non-EU country, Olivera had to begin her training from scratch and although she was awarded her FRCA Part 1, her training visa was about to expire, so she decided to stay, and in 1996 took up a post as a Staff Grade anaesthetist at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital where she has remained ever since. She has been appointed as an Associate Specialist for 15 years, developing an interest in pain medicine.

She has a love of teaching and simulator training, is a member of the editorial Board of the Serbian Journal of Anaesthesia and Pain management, and is founder, organiser and scientific committee President of the Belgrade International Symposium on Pain.

In 2010 she was awarded an Association SAS Travel Grant and wrote a lovely piece for Anaesthesia News about her time in the Tuebingen in Germany where she attended the purpose built TuPASS Centre for Safety and Simulation.

In 2013 she became the Association's SAS Committee Chair where she developed and led the Committee to the strong position it is now in. She has organised five popular Association Seminars, which always have a waiting list and are repeated year on year. She also organised and chaired the SAS Sessions at Annual Congress and WSM, and asked that the first ever Association SAS Seminar (just for SAS doctors) be run regionally, recognising that SAS doctors sometimes struggle to get study leave. Under her leadership the first SAS Webinar was a great success. She is also a trained Association mentor and encourages other SAS doctors to become mentors and to be mentored. She has been an Association Linkman for many years, taking this role very seriously and disseminating and collecting information as required.

On the SAS Committee she has been key in laying the foundations for the Committee's long term strategy, taking this strategy from nothing to an aspirational level. She played a key role in the joint Association of Anaesthetists/RCoA publication: 'Crossing boundaries, inspiring and supporting our SAS doctors'. She is also a member of the Working Party updating the Association's Day Surgery guideline, as well as taking on the onerous task of updating the SAS Handbook, which is a truly marvelous publication.

Olivera is kind and gentle, trustworthy and compassionate. She is extremely proud of being an SAS doctor and has been a role model to many. She once said that: 'I believe in creating your future from your future, not your past. The future depends on what we do in the present'. As Board Lead for the SAS Committee, I would like to add a personal note to thank to Olivera, she has done what she believes in, by her present actions she has made the SAS Committee stronger, more active and energised. Olivera, you should be proud, you are truly worthy of this prestigious award.

Dr Samantha Shinde
Vice President