

Greetings

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Congratulations to the editor and to the officers of the American Name Society on the 50th anniversary of the founding of ANS.

From its rocky and tumultuous beginning in 1951 to the present, the Society has managed, through the efforts of many persons, to survive and make outstanding contributions to the study of names and to the furtherance of knowledge through the many scholarly articles in the Society's magazine. The officers of the Society have also encouraged the publication of a library of books and articles on names, promoted the importance of name study through the many regional conferences, and cooperated with comparable societies in other countries.

I became associated with the American Name Society in 1954. I'm not sure how I became interested in names. My first academic interest was literature and writing (influenced by the Fugitives and Agrarians at Vanderbilt), with language study coming later, influenced by Thomas Pyles. Probably my own name, which to me was strange, interested me, but more likely was the requirement of a geography teacher that I draw maps of countries of the world—there were fewer named countries 70 years ago. That experience encouraged me to find out more about the names.

It is difficult to name any one person who served as the catalyst for the enormous amount of knowledge and understanding of name study, for so many contributed to its half century of success. If I were asked to name only one person, however, I would claim that Elsdon C. Smith, the founder of ANS, went beyond the call of duty to sustain the Society in its troublesome first years and to furnish advice to the officers on both its business affairs and its publications for many successful years during his lifetime. For me, it was a great privilege and honor to have worked with him over the years I was actively involved in the work of the Society. I will not name the many others who were supportive and helpful but then they know, they know. Again, congratulations and best wishes for the future.