

CHAPTER 4 The 1940s

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' official seal—bearing a balance scale, a caduceus (the herald's staff in Greek mythology, traditionally associated with healing), a cooking scale, a shaft of wheat, and a cornucopia, along with the Academy's motto, *Quam Plurimis Prodesse*, Latin for "to benefit as many as possible"—was first presented to the membership in 1940. This announcement of a visual identity for the Academy occurred in tandem with developments in the organization's national identity.

The first half of the 1940s at the Academy was marked by tireless efforts to assist the government, which had summoned dietitians for the second time to join the military ranks when the United States entered World War II in 1941. It became common for the Academy leadership to participate in congressional hearings, which ultimately led to the creation of the Women's Auxiliary Medical Corps, bringing greater opportunity and recognition for dietitians in the military, and to attend meetings with the Civil Service Commission and collaborate with the American Red Cross and the Surgeon General to identify and quickly train dietitians for service. The annual meetings received a fair amount of press coverage as they focused on wartime efforts—in fact, the 1943 meeting was titled "The War Conference."

By the time the war ended squarely in the middle of the decade, the demands it had made on dietitians had been immense, so 1945 represented a year of resetting the Academy's priorities. Not only was health care delivery changing from home-based to hospital-based, the profession and the Academy were changing as well. New opportunities with greater responsibility at all practice levels were emerging, and the Academy set to work on outlining minimum curricular requirements for dietetics programs and training of dietetic aids, developing a robust research program, increasing its legislative activity, establishing a scholarship fund, and bolstering services offered to members, among other efforts. A new constitution was adopted in 1949, which restructured the Academy and strengthened the role of the House of Delegates, and a public relations program was created to advance the profession and increase the public image of dietitians and propel the profession into the second half of the century.

The Cleveland Health Museum's Peter and Polly Peppy display, created for the public by dietitians (circa 1940).





Mary Barber (left), Academy president, hands the gavel to Nelda Ross, president-elect, at the 1941 Annual Meeting banquet in St. Louis, Missouri. With World War II in full engagement at this time and dietitians not yet conferred full military status, Barber's presidential speech at this meeting noted that, "The year of work that we are now entering is our year to prove that the [Academy] has developed [members] of vision, capable of leadership, [and] selfless in their desire to aid in making every citizen in the United States better fitted physically for whatever lies ahead."

LEFT: A military dietitian models the various World War II uniforms. Clockwise from top left: White dress uniform, taupe semidress uniform, alternative uniform with jacket, and semidress uniform with coat.

RIGHT: Lenna F. Cooper (right), Academy president from 1937 to 1938 and supervisor of US Army dietitians in World War I, and Helen Burns, supervisor of US Army dietitians during World War II, donned their uniforms when they met at the Academy's 1942 Annual Meeting in Detroit, Michigan.

