

Colorful Medicine: Breaking Barriers, Stereotypes, and Making Strides

Francis M. Foster, DDS A Community Treasure



Biographical Information

Born
Richmond, Virginia
Historic Jackson Ward District
1921

Bachelor of Science
Virginia Union University
Richmond, 1942

Doctor of Dentistry
Howard University School of Dentistry
1946

**Captain in the U.S. Army
Dental Corps**
where he served in the Philippines,
Guam, and Okinawa, 1946-1948

Quotes

Teaching Quote

It's been a great opportunity. It's given me the chance to share a lot of experience with students and faculty and to share a great learning experience with them. The diverse multicultural population offers an added opportunity for great philosophical exposure.

Words to Live by:

- It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice.
- There's not a right way to do a wrong thing.
- Being a good neighbor in community service is a real way pay for being there.

Notable Characteristic

- Opened a private dental practice in Richmond's Historic Jackson Ward District (1948)
- Has served on several governor-appointed boards in Virginia since 1970
- Was offered a position with an emphasis on the centennial celebration for the VCU School of Dentistry (1991)
- Assistant professor of general practice dentistry with clinical directorship to the Prosthetic Service Chair (1992)
- Received the Outstanding Faculty Award from the American College of Dentists, Virginia section (2000)
- Received the Oliver Hill Citizen of the Year Award from the Richmond Chapter of the Sigma Pi Phi Boudé (2002)
- Presented with the first Virginia Crockford Award from the Capital Area Health Advisory Council to recognize his longstanding service in health care advocacy (2002)
- Designated a VDA Hero by the Virginia Dental Association in their spring 2003 newsletter.
- Received a lifetime achievement award from the Urban League of Greater Richmond for significant contributions to community betterment (2003)

Interesting Fact

- Featured in Richmond Times Dispatch Black History Profiles (2004)
- Received the Humanitarian Award, Richmond chapter, of the National Chapter of Community and Justice (NCCJ) for contributions to opposing racism, bigotry, and bias in the Richmond community (2004)
- Received the first Semper Virginia Award by the Library of Virginia Foundation for his leadership in advancing the interests of libraries and literature in Virginia (2004)
- Treasurer and original member of the board of the Virginia Center for the Book
- Instrumental in the creation of the Virginia Authors Room at the Library of Virginia
- Established the Foster Family Fund to receive donations for the African American book collection at the Richmond Public Library
- Former chairman of the Richmond Public Library Board
- Served on the boards of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Historic Richmond Foundation, and the Richmond Area Community Council
- Served on the Virginia Commonwealth University Library Advisory Committee (VLAC)

Shannon D. Jones, MLS, MIS
Tompkins-McCaw Library, VCU Libraries

May Edward Chinn, M.D.



Biographical Information

Born
Great Barrington, Massachusetts
1896

Died
New York City, New York
1980

Medical Degree
Baylor Medical School, 1926

Master's Degree
Public Health, Columbia University
1933

Quotes

Become involved with the problems of your Nation, your State, your city, and especially with your immediate neighborhood. Help those with problems. Help those to take the next step—UPWARDS.

Firsts...

- African American woman to graduate from Bellevue Hospital Medical College
- African American woman to intern at Harlem Hospital
- Woman to ride with the Harlem Hospital ambulance crew on emergency calls
- Of a few female African American physicians to practice in New York City

Accomplishments

- Opened a private practice on Edgecombe Avenue at the Edgecombe Sanitarium for nonwhite patients
- Studied with George Papanicolaou, noted for his work on the Pap smear test for cervical cancer
- Promoted cancer screening methods for nonsymptomatic patients, routine Pap smears, and the use of family medical histories to predict cancer risk
- Started a society to help African American women go to medical school (1975)
- Consultant to the Phelps-Stokes Fund, an educational foundation

Noteworthy

- Dr. Chinn was an accomplished musician
- She did not retire from private practice until she was 81 years old

Tomeka K. Oubichon, MLIS
AIRS Library, Administration on Aging, DHHS

Edith Irby Jones, M.D.



Biographical Information

Born
Claremont, Arkansas
1927

Bachelor of Science
Knoxville College, Tennessee, 1948
* Top honor in biology, chemistry, and physics

Doctor of Medicine
University of Arkansas School of Medicine from University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, 1953
* Top African American graduate and first African American to be admitted

Quotes

Personal Inspiration

Nobody ever told me I had to be white to succeed, just that I had to do my best and that that was true for everybody.

Advice to Medical Students

Let them know the real truth, that if they are really concerned about their fellow man, they will enjoy medicine. If they are going into medicine as a money-making project, or a job, then they might as well select something else; that medicine continues to be a service that we render.

Her Philosophy of Service

When we give of ourselves unselfishly, we receive our blessing in multiples. Therefore, if for no other reason than to provide for the safety and well-being of our loved ones, which is most basic, we have no alternative but to help our fellow man. Without regard for your individual belief system or religious denomination, it is the wish of the creator, and the way the universe works, so it must become the nature of man. We have no other sensible choice.

National Medical Association Presidential Inaugural Address, 1985

We give little when we give only our material possessions. It is when we give of ourselves that we truly give—the long challenging hours with patients who can pay and those who cannot pay; the agony of sharing the hurts of families with the death of loved ones; the observations of dehumanizing effects of seeing the jobless, the crushed ambitions, and the shunning when all we have to hold on to is the “being within” to inspire the young to take up our role. We have the comfort of knowing that our work is not to make a living but to make a life, not just for ourselves or a select few, but life with its fullness for all, and especially providing the access to health care, which is our special charge.

Firsts

- First African American student to attend racially mixed classes in the South (1948)
- First African American graduate of University of Arkansas School of Medicine (now University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences) (1952)
- First African American woman to complete her residency in internal medicine at Baylor College of Medicine (1958)
- First woman president of the National Medical Association (1985)

Honors

- Internist of the Year Award from the American Society of Internal Medicine (1988)
- First recipient of the Volunteerism and Community Service Award from the Texas Academy of Internal Medicine (2000)
- Trailblazer Award from the National Black Nurses Association (2004)
- Inducted into the College of Medicine Hall of Fame, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (2004)

Accomplishments

- Charter member of Gamma Mu Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Member of the Freedom Four in Arkansas (1949-1952)
- Co-founder of Houston's Mercy Hospital (1960s-1970s)
- Set up private practice in Houston's inner city (1962)
- Assistant professor at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas (1963-present)
- Owner of Houston's first black bookstore (1972)
- Only female founding member of the Association of Black Cardiologists (1974)
- Assistant professor at University of Texas (1976-present)
- Charter member of the Physicians for Human Rights, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 (1985)
- Led U.S. Task Force on Health to Haiti (1986)
- Established and supports a clinic in Vera Cruz, Mexico (late 1980s)
- Founder of the Edith Irby Jones Foundation (early 1990s)
- Founder of the Edith Irby Jones Clinic, Vaudreuil, Haiti (1992)
- Dr. Jocelyn Elders, former Surgeon General of the United States, credits Dr. Edith Irby Jones for inspiring her to become a doctor

Cassandra R. Allen, MLS
Specialized Information Services, U.S. National Library of Medicine, NIH, DHHS