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EDITORIAL SECTION

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EDITORIAL SECTION

LOOKING FORWARD

“THERE IS NOTHING in life more constant than change.” In the course of change, adversity sometimes follows in its wake, but even the pangs occasioned by unfortunate transition are often lessened by the invaluable contributions and traditions which remain ever constant. Then, again, there is that change which bespeaks only progress and growth, thereby offsetting stagnation and unwarranted self-satisfaction, otherwise unavoidable in the life of an individual or of an institution.

The College of Dentistry has experienced, since the last issue of *THE DENTOSCOPE*, both “its bitter and its sweet.” Benumbed by the shock of the sudden passing of our beloved Dr. Frederic Pelham Barrier, the College was forced to bow to the inevitable. Without his active influence, without his wholesome, exemplary personality, and without his unselfish, unstinted service and devotion, the College of Dentistry has faced one of its gravest problems of adjustment—adjustment due to his remarkable versatility in curricular and extra-curricular activity in our institution. Yet, neither absence nor time can eradicate the rich and bountiful contributions which he made during his twenty-eight years of service to the University. As a memoir of his work, no doubt, many will preserve “The History of the College of Dentistry” which appeared in the first issue of *THE DENTOSCOPE*. This one and only full account of the historical development of the College, which was released from the press the day following Dr. Barrier’s passing, marked his final contribution to his Alma Mater and to his profession.

On the side of constructive change in the school, since the last publication, several of the then prospective projects have materialized into realities. We have witnessed the completion of extensive physical improvement in the dental building, the installation of a department for Dental Hygienists, the reorganization of library facilities, and continued progress on our “Enrollment Extension” program. This last reference to enrollment does not infer that the objective has been reached nor can we soundly expect to realize this objective short of several years of intensive work. Because this is a project vital to the alumni and the institution alike, it seems timely to discuss it, briefly, here.

Since the increase in entrance requirements, the expense of dental education, and the depression have limited effectively the number of Negro

students taking up Dentistry during the past several years, the recruiting of dental ranks has been a question of constant concern. Our remedial measures during the past two years have brought encouraging results. However, the program will be entirely successful only after larger numbers than can be accommodated begin to apply for Dentistry.

One of the greatest assets to the enrollment project is the help which has come from alumni. A fair percentage of the Freshman class this year was recommended by former graduates, and, one of this number was the recipient of the Frederic Pelham Barrier Memorial Scholarship, a scholarship, subscribed by the Faculty of Dentistry, covering full tuition for one year. A number of other scholarships were offered for a second time this year. These, too, played no small part in directing interest toward Dentistry and to our College, in particular. These scholarships were given by the University, by Dr. Louise C. Ball, a Trustee, by the United States Government, through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and by the Robert T. Freeman Dental Society of Washington, D. C. All of these aids, combined with efforts of our faculty to engender interest in Dentistry through student convocations, have proved fruitful.

But these are only mild gestures as compared with the intensified campaign which must be launched by the profession, itself, if Dentistry, among Negroes, is to stand out as a learned profession, attracting the finest of our youth to its ranks. There can be no greater inducement offered to a young man to seek the field of Dentistry than that which comes from his personal contact with successful practitioners, who have been upstanding in their communities and who have been the kind of citizens whom young men would like to emulate. This, then, places the solution of the problem squarely where it belongs—in the hands of the practitioners of the field. Whether or not we bring the problem to a happy solution will depend, largely, upon our answer to the following questions:

Do we regard our profession as a learned one and do we hold our fellows in it in highest esteem? Do we feel a high sense of honor, dignity, and responsibility because we are members of the dental profession? Do we regard Dentistry as a fit heritage to hand down to our younger generations as a future life's work? Have you, individually, directed any able young man or woman, in or outside of your immediate family, into the profession of Dentistry? The answers to these questions will not be found in the majority vote of the readers of these lines, but, rather in the living testimony of a substantial quota of upright, scholarly followers, inspired by you to seek Dentistry as a career.

Not unlike the experience of many other youths, I found myself standing at the crossroads of choosing a life's vocation. I had pursued a brief course in electrical and steam engineering and had partially completed the machinist's trade when I realized the limitations which the future held for me in these fields. Here I stood, a bewildered young man, gazing at the sign posts while awaiting urge and instruction to guide me into the right path. Many successful physicians, during this period of uncertainty, directed my interest toward the splendid opportunities offered in the field of Medicine. Again, wholesome and inspiring advice came from a lawyer who took pride in directing young men into his profession. But not a single dentist attempted "to sell" the many virtues and possibilities which lay dormant and even unexplored in the field of Dentistry. Therefore, my decision to enter Dentistry may be regarded as purely *accidental*, since my interest was stimulated solely by one of the laity whose ambition to study Dentistry had never been realized.

In justice to the worthiness and future of our profession, the program of recruiting our ranks must not be left to *chance* as it has been in the past.

Howard Alumni form an important percentage of the Negro dental practitioners of the United States, and, by their numbers, alone, they are capable of controlling, fully, the trend in dental practice and conduct among our group. It is within the province of the Alumni, individually and collectively, therefore, to take the lead in rejuvenating a spirit of loyalty to the profession. Local dental groups should band themselves together for mutual uplift, without partisan aims or selfish ambitions, so that every ethical dentist of the community would feel compelled to support the society. Educational extension programs should be developed to enlighten the laity and associated professions as to the scope and importance of oral health service. Seminars or directed study conferences should form a part of the purpose of every dental organization. And, finally, because of its importance, local dental organizations, as well as individual dentists, should strive to boost the profession by encouraging young men of the highest scholarship and character to enter the ranks.

The hope which has been given by the favorable and continual change in our enrollment and other significant undertakings has emanated from the spirit and acts of our faithful sons and supporters. Thus encouraged, the College of Dentistry will continue, with assurance, to "look forward."

FEDERAL EMERGENCY RELIEF

A CONSIDERATION of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, in so far as medical care is concerned, reveals the fact that the policy is "to augment and render more adequate the facilities already existing in the community for medical care." Within the provisions of this policy, there should be assured good medical service in all its branches at a low cost to the mutual benefit of the indigent patient, physician, nurse, dentist, and tax-payer.

When it is considered that the policies adopted by the F. E. R. A. are "to recognize the traditional physician-patient and dentist-patient relationship," we might well ask the question, "Are you getting your share of the relief work?"

A smooth working of the F. E. R. A. plan necessitates co-ordination on the part of local medical and dental societies as to agreement on fees, distribution of patients and the like. Are members of Negro dental societies included in the above deliberations, or, in cases where there are no Negro societies, is the Negro appraised of the agreements reached? Every Negro dentist should get Bulletin No. 7 of the F. E. R. A. Rules and Regulations and thoroughly acquaint himself with the provisions therein.

Relief plans are being rapidly set up in cities throughout the country. The Detroit plan elicits interest because not only does it investigate and select patients for services, but it arranges for collections of fees from patients who are able to pay. These arrangements are satisfactory to the patients. Ten per cent of the sums actually collected is retained by the bureau for collection services. The plan operates on a ten-point basis from which the following are quoted:

Point 7. "This plan preserves the recognized patient-physician relationship. * * *

Point 8. "The most important feature of this plan is that it places the complete medical and hospital services within the reach of every worthy patient and provides an easy payment plan for the settlement of medical bills."

The St. Louis plan is especially appealing to us because it is the result of agreements between The St. Louis Dental Society, white, The Mound City Dental Forum, colored, and The Citizens' Committee on Relief and Employment. Here we see, all have a voice in the plan and it naturally follows that benefits accrue to all.

From Denver, Colorado, comes the information that one of the six members of the Economic Committee of The Denver Dental Association is a Negro. All Howardites will be happy to know that this member is one of our own graduates, Dr. Clarence F. Holmes of the class of 1920.

The Committee decided upon the fees to be paid the dentist for direct relief. We heartily endorse the Denver attitude.

On the other hand, we learn that a Negro dentist from Houston, Texas, did not know that the F. E. R. A. Bulletin No. 7 existed. There being no Negroes in the dental association in Texas, i. e. an affiliated branch of the American Dental Association, this news was withheld from members of our race. This is symbolic, perhaps, of conditions which are all too prevalent.

Now, since the policy of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration is to preserve the traditional physician-patient and dentist-patient relationship, any other mode of distributing patients, such as by bidding, favoritism, or any form of collaboration is at variance with that policy and is not to be encouraged.

A LETTER TO ALUMNI

DEAR ALUMNUS:

When we mailed the last issue of THE DENTOSCOPE to you we also sent a questionnaire to be executed and returned to us. We are making an effort to develop complete files so that we can at any time be prepared to give such information about graduates as may be desired. Further, we are anxious to keep a live file so that correspondence sent out from the office will be sure to reach you. We wish to consider each alumnus as a spoke in a great wheel of which the College is the hub. Both are essential to the efficiency of the wheel. The response to the questionnaire was not representative. We realize that it is very easy to put a letter "on file" and forget it, so we are enclosing another questionnaire with the request that you execute it at once before it has had a chance to slip your mind.

The College is doing what it can to maintain alumni contact and to aid alumni in every way possible. You can do your part in completing the circle in the following ways:

(1) Send us interesting specimens, models and roentgenograms for our museum. Many of you have collections which may not mean so much to you, but can be of great help to students who are yet to experience the intricacies of practice. If you do not wish to donate them, make an indefinite loan and strict account will be kept of same.

(2.) When in Washington come to the school and see what is going on. You may be an inspiration to some student.

(3) Fill in the questionnaire *now* and send it in. Notify us of any change of address and of any accomplishment of yours or of any alumnus.

We wish you continued success in your field of service, and it is our hope that you will find some time apart from your routine to realize the value of and maintain your College-Alumni contact.



THE FIRST CLASS OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY