



Mildred E. Newton, Nurse Educator

by Carol H. Robinson, RN, MS

Charles A. Doan, MD, did not give up easily. In 1951, as dean of the OSU College of Medicine, he knew he wanted Mildred E. Newton to accept his offer to be the Director of The Ohio State University School of Nursing. He was, however, having trouble convincing her to accept the position. Miss Newton (she never referred to herself as “doctor”) was Assistant Professor and Assistant Dean in the School of Nursing, University of California, San Francisco, and was not convinced that the OSU directorship was a position in which she was interested. Only after a number of letters were exchanged did a phone call from Dr. Doan convince Miss Newton to come to Columbus. She later said, “Dr. Doan kept me on the phone so long I got tired of standing so I decided to accept the offer.” Dr. Doan probably could have predicted what would follow for Miss Newton: a long and distinguished tenure at The Ohio State University as Professor of Nursing, and Director of the School of Nursing, during which time she built enrollment, strengthened faculty, expanded curriculum, and guided the school to the national recognition which it continues to enjoy to this day.

Mildred Emily Newton was born in the city of Cedar Falls, Black Hawk County, Iowa, on July 1, 1901, the daughter of George Whitemore Newton, a professor at Iowa State University, and Marian Ross. She grew up in Ames, Iowa, attended a Presbyterian church there, and graduated from Iowa State Teachers College High School in Ames. She continued her education at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where she graduated from Evanston Hospital School of Nursing and received her Bachelor of Science degree from Northwestern in 1924. She received a Master of Science in Education degree from the University of Southern California in 1932 and a



Doctor of Philosophy in Education from Stanford University in 1949.

During her nursing career Mildred Newton held teaching and administrative positions in three institutions. From 1925-1934 she was an instructor and supervisor at the Pasadena Hospital School of Nursing as well as director of the School of Nursing of Pasadena Junior College (1929-1934). Moving to the University of California, San Francisco in 1934, she was Instructor, Assistant Professor, and Assistant Dean in the School of Nursing before moving to Ohio. A San Francisco editorial at the time of her death stated that “Miss Newton was a major influence in this [University of California, San Francisco] school’s development...during her tenure at the University of California she was actively involved in the creation and development of this first autonomous school of nursing in a state university. She was one of the key planners in the development of a master’s degree program which met all university requirements.”

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Recent Donations

The Medical Heritage Center thanks those listed for their recent support.

Kathy Baird : information about Saint Anthony Hospital ● George Bell, MD : Collection of human teaching bones belonging to Dr. Clarence Adams ● Donald F. Bowers, DDS : framed medical artworks ● John C. Burnham : several history books and journals ● Steven Gilbert : picture of construction crew in front of Univ. Hospital construction ● Dr. Albert O. Humbertson : illustrations from Dr. Palmer's textbook ● Ralph D. Lach, MD : books, Cambridge electrocardiograph, lead glass face mask ● George Robert Lucas Meiling and Dr. Paige Lucas O'Mahoney : Dr. Richard L. Meiling's doctor's bags, medical equipment, personal awards ● Dr. John and Mrs. Carol Robinson : *A Text-book of Nursing* by Clara S. Weeks-Shaw ● Geraldine Price : OSU Nursing photographs and memorabilia ● Gwen Trudeau, MD : Residency Certificate from Protestant hospital, two slide boxes of frog anatomy, department memorabilia and artifacts ● Laura Hegedus : French bedpan ● Mr. And Mrs. John Turkopp : Starling Medical College Catalog 1877-1878, name plate, two framed portraits of Dr. Turkopp, prescription scale, minor operating kit ● Mrs. Eloise Saslaw : photos of Dr. Samuel Saslaw ● Charles Wooley, MD : Hippocratic plaque, *Clinical Reexamination of the motor-symptoms of chorea*, 1898 and *An Analysis of 3000 cases of melancholia*, 1897, both by S. Weir Mitchell.

Monetary Donations: Donald F. Bowers, DDS ● William W. Davis, MD ● Dr. Edwin and Mrs. Nancy Hamilton : in memory of Sally Lewis; in honor of the marriage of Ruth Wood to John Terry, MD; in memory of Mark Zangmeister, MD; in memory of Marzella B. Saneholtz ● Drs. George and Ruth Paulson : in memory of Sally Lewis; in memory of Phil Cass's father; in memory of R. Stevenson, MD.

MHC SEEKS DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

The Medical Heritage Center is searching for permanent donations of material related to the medical community of Franklin County from the early 1800s – 1997. The scope of this search includes, but is not limited to; materials related to early hospitals, health organizations, health education programs (nursing, doctors, administrators etc.), art images, and the OSU Health Center. Needed items include: photographs, diaries, documents, letters to other health professionals or health related memorabilia and artifacts. Anyone who has material to donate should contact Barbara Van Brimmer, Curator, Medical Heritage Center. (Phone: 614-292-4891; Email: vanbrimmer.2@osu.edu)

Calendar of Events

September 27, 2001 *The Coleman Fall Lecture* will feature Christopher Ellison, MD, OSU Chair of Surgery. Dr. Ellison will present a historical perspective of the Zollinger-Ellison Syndrome.

Fall 2001 Sherman Katz, MD, OSU Division of Vascular Surgery, will present the *Medical Heritage Lecture* on aspects of collecting medical instruments and artifacts.

March 2002 M. Therese Southgate, MD, Senior Contributing Editor of JAMA will present the *Warren Lecture*. Her topic will be based on her work with the art covers for JAMA and her recently released book.

May 2002 The Medical Heritage Center will sponsor a tea during National Nurses Week to honor nurses' historical contribution to medicine.

More details will be forthcoming prior to each event.

Mildred Newton led the OSU School (now College) of Nursing for 17 years, from September 1951 until her retirement in July 1968, initiating many changes during these years. She was the first director to hold a doctoral degree and she emphasized the need to recruit doctorally prepared faculty in order to move the school into the academic atmosphere of the greater university. The Bachelor of Science program in nursing received national accreditation within a year of her arrival, and a Master of Science degree was started in 1953. She was instrumental in planning a School of Nursing building, which was constructed in 1966, later named Mildred E. Newton Hall in recognition of her contribution to the school and the university.

Not only did Newton strengthen the nursing program within the school, but she was dedicated to serving the nursing profession on the national level as well. Geraldine Price, a former faculty member, remembers Miss Newton's involvement, saying, "She [Newton] was involved in many national programs and policy decisions, and she opened the door for her faculty to become involved in national accreditation and advisory roles as well." Miss Newton was active in the National League of Nursing for many years, serving on the Board of Directors for six years. She was an active participant in other professional nursing organizations, serving on many key committees and councils: the Collegiate Board of Review; the Accrediting Service Joint Committee of the American Hospital Association and National League for Nursing. She also served as a consultant and member of a number of advisory committees: the W.H. Kellogg Foundation; the U.S. Department of the Army; the Office of the Surgeon General; the U.S. Department of Defense (Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services); and as chairman of the Nurse Scientist Training Grant Committee of the U.S. Public Health Service.

Along with her leadership within the school of nursing, and her professional services nationally, Newton collaborated in the writing of three textbooks and wrote the chapter on the history of nursing for the seventh edition of *Professional Nursing*. In addition she published articles for professional journals, largely in the field of nursing, and

was widely sought after as a speaker.

Although her professional life was demanding and productive, Miss Newton found time for friends and travel. Her hobbies included dogs, music, driving, and camping. A favorite recreation was gardening. A student of history and philosophy, Miss Newton was particularly interested in the life of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, and in the lives of early leaders in nursing in this

country. She inspired many students with her accounts of the rich heritage which has come to nursing through the contribution of these early leaders. In recognition of her interest in history, she was given a beginning collection of nursing stamps. She became a student of stamps in medicine and nursing and added many stamps to the collection. She eventually organized the collection into four volumes: the history of medicine and nursing; the history of the International Red Cross;



Newton with Doan and his daughter, Ellen at her nursing graduation.

world attempts to eliminate crippling diseases; and recognition given to individuals who made outstanding contributions to health. She donated this collection to the Health Sciences Library at The Ohio State University, where it now resides in the Medical Heritage Center as part of the nursing collection of the Center.

Though Mildred Newton's contributions to education and teaching, to nursing organizations, and to research and writing were noteworthy, her contributions to the development of individuals—faculty, students, and associates—were, in some sense, far greater. "She brought out the best in us, and had us achieve far more than we thought possible," Geraldine Price remembers. Miss Newton's sincere belief that every person had worth permeated her every contact with others. Through her beliefs and actions she enabled faculty and students to achieve their individual potential, transcending even their own expectations.

Dr. Doan must have recognized Mildred Newton's potential when he worked so hard to recruit her. Her accomplishments in her 17 years as director probably exceeded even Dr. Doan's expectations and for his efforts and for Mildred Newton's tenure at Ohio State we can all indeed be grateful.

Sources for this article: the Medical Heritage Center archives and personal communication

Center Welcomes New Staff Member

Judith (Judy) Wiener was recently hired as the archivist of the Medical Heritage Center. She will be organizing the papers of Dr. William G. Myers, a founder of nuclear medicine. Judy is a recent graduate, earning her Masters in Public History from Wright State University in Dayton.

The Myers collection is over 300 cubic feet in size and contains photographs, correspondence, artifacts and research materials gathered by Dr. Myers throughout his career. Once organized, the collection will be a large and valuable resource to researchers in the fields of medical history and nuclear medicine.

Funding for this position was provided by the Myers' Estate.



Judy Wiener, archivist for Myers Collection



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