

HOUSE CALL



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A quarterly publication of the **Medical Heritage Center** at The Ohio State University

Special Issue Message

The Medical Heritage Center and the entire health sciences community experienced an irreplaceable loss this Fall when our founder and curator, Barbara Van Brimmer, passed away October 9, 2003 after a brief battle with cancer. I had the privilege of working with Barbara during the past three years. I witnessed firsthand her commitment to the history of the health sciences in central Ohio and her desire to create and grow an outstanding center dedicated to preserving that history. Her excitement and enthusiasm was contagious and, consequently, I am infected with the desire and commitment to continue her hard work and high standards during this transitional period for the center.

This issue of House Call is dedicated to Barbara and her legacy. Included within are the eulogy presented by Prior Health Sciences Library Director, Susan Kroll, and information on continuing Barbara's legacy through the establishment of an endowment in her name. Information is also included about the Columbus Medical Association Matching Seed Grant, which will support the publication of the book by Barbara and Dr. Charles Wooley. The book will tell the story of Central Ohio Medicine and further fuel the continuing efforts of the center.

A lot of exciting activities have also been occurring at the center. News of these activities will soon follow in our Winter issue to be published in January.

Judith A. Wiener, MA
Interim Curator and Archivist
The Medical Heritage Center

Tribute to Barbara Van Brimmer

By Susan Kroll, MLS



Barbara Van Brimmer

Last month I had a birthday and despite her illness Barb sent me a card in which she wrote, "when are you going to catch up to me?" She was referring to the fact that I am three years younger, but I wanted to interpret the card differently. The answer is that I could never catch up to all the accomplishments Barb has had in her career. I deeply regret that her cancer progressed so quickly that I never got to have a conversation to remind her of all she had accomplished.

So today I thought I would have that conversation with you. Barb came to our library in 1985, and in her 18 years with us she held 7 different positions, each with more responsibility drawing on different strengths and interests. Her talent and passion for librarianship led her successfully through each position and on to the next challenge.

Barb's accomplishments are so impressive that she was to be nominated for promotion to full professor in the upcoming year. I am saddened that she will not be able to receive the honor she so deserved. She leaves a professional legacy with ten journal articles, several books and book chapters, twenty-five presentations, and ten awards and grants. Barb leaves a legacy of service as chair of the Medical Library Association's History of Health Sciences Section and president of both the Ohio Health Sciences Library Association and Central Ohio Health Sciences Library Association. She served on 50 university committees and 30 other committees both local and national. Through her leadership in these organizations, Barb has touched many people's lives and developed many friends who I know are here today.

Continued on Page 2

Tribute (Continued from Page 1)

In 1992, Barb shared her dream to document the heritage of medicine in Columbus and Franklin county. As the librarian in charge of our history collection, she was often asked to answer questions related to the development of medicine. As a library with limited resources, adding a new department was a daunting task; but Barb was not dissuaded. With her enthusiasm, passion and determination, she received a grant from the Columbus Medical Association and funding from University Hospitals to develop the Medical Heritage Center. As librarians, we do not often have the opportunity to leave a legacy; but Barb has given all of us in the library a much deeper appreciation for the role of history, as well as a reminder that we need to appreciate the historical developments that have led to the amazing progress we have witnessed in medicine.

The librarians at the Prior Health Sciences Library, in their concern for Barb, were able to reflect on happier memories. One librarian recalled the day the search committee interviewed Barb for her position at the Library. She said, "there was another librarian we interviewed at the time who had credentials similar to Barb's and who interviewed well and seemed a promising candidate. Our decision came down to Barb or this other person; what I recall is a strong consensus among those of us involved that, despite similar credentials on paper there was "just something about Barb." Another colleague sees Barb everywhere she looks in the Library. She was in charge of the library renovation and the beautiful building we have today is a direct reflection of her talents.

As a library staff, we are an extended family; seeing each other through births and deaths, good times and bad. There have also been some shining moments; one is the development of the Medical Heritage Center. At the library, we have pledged to honor Barb's work in continuing the development of the Medical Heritage Center and are working with her family to establish a scholarship in Barb's name to enable other librarians to attend training in medical history and preservation.

So you see, there is no way to "catch up" to Barb. She is irreplaceable and the hole that she leaves in our hearts and lives will always be there. I want to thank Rick and her family for letting me have this conversation with you.

*Written and delivered by Susan Kroll,
October 14, 2003 at First Baptist Church in Delaware, Ohio*

Van Brimmer Scholarship Endowment

A fund has been established in Barbara Van Brimmer's name to aid library professionals who wish to seek continuing education opportunities in collection preservation. To contribute to this fund, please fill out and mail this form according to the directions located below.

Please make checks payable to: The Ohio State University Foundation

Include this form with you memorial donation to the Barbara Van Brimmer Endowment and mail to: The Office of Medical Center Development & Alumni Affairs, 1375 Perry Street, Building 13, 5th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43201

Donation From:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Recent Donations

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

Madonna Argood: Nursing books • Dr. John Burnham: History books and journals • James H. Caldwell, M.D.: Eight endoscopes and book *The History of Endoscopy* • Charles Dozer: Microscope • Dr. Lloyd Horrocks: Lipid Lab Artifacts • Dr. John A. Lindmood: child's leg braces • Mrs. Nancy Claypool Long: Nursing memorabilia • Bill Ollila: Framed collage of Dr. Robert Zollinger • Marli W. Parobek: Photos and documents from C.O.N. scrapbooks in the name of Ohio State University College of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau Epsilon Chapter • Virginia Reynolds: Books • Peggy Strow: Nursing books and nursing memorabilia (in name of Ruby Mae Martin)

Monetary Donations:

Dr. Charles Hamilton (in memory of Barbara Van Brimmer) • Dr. Ed & Nancy Hamilton (in honor of Tom F. Lewis, M.D., & Robert J. Murphy, M.D.) • Dr. William Kendall (in honor of his son, Robert J. Kendall) • Frances McNew (Friends of Nursing History) • Jack Parrish, M.D. • Drs. George & Ruth Paulson (in memory of Dr. Jacob Moses, in name of Robert J. Murphy, M.D.; to CMA Book Grant in honor of Barbara Van Brimmer; and House Call publication support)

Profiles in Excellence: A New House Call Series

This issue features a new regular feature, named *Profiles in Excellence*. The column is intended to briefly highlight the exemplary people, places, and events that have shaped central Ohio medical history.

If you would like to nominate a subject for this column or would like to contribute to this feature, please contact Judith Wiener at (614) 292-9273 or e-mail wiener.3@osu.edu

Profiles in Excellence: Thomas E. Shaffer

By George Paulson, M.D.



Shaffer looks over one of his patients. c. 1960s

Thomas E. Shaffer (1908-2003) died several days before his 95th birthday, and the memorial service was a celebration of his life and a reunion of medical and nursing colleagues.

If being a doctor's doctor is a particular honor, then surely special praise is also due to pediatricians such as Dr. Shaffer who doctor the children of other doctors. After an education at Cornell and Yale Tom taught and served at OSU and at Children's Hospital and was soon beloved by many who met him and by all who needed him. He received numerous honors including a presidential citation for his contribution to safe children's athletics. He was noted for his skills on the committees of many national organizations, and his own state once named him Pediatrician of the Year. Tom was one of only 5 physicians from Franklin County

who ever received the OSMA Distinguished Service Award.

In a video-taped oral history at the Medical Heritage Center done three years before his death he recollected, with a catch in his voice, the anguish of watching a roomful of infants in respiratory distress before the miracle of antibiotics. A week before his death this independent and gentle man said he did not want to live if he needed a wheel chair. The evening of the night he died he seemed slightly confused and the nurse recounted that he called her because he seemed to hear the cry of a baby in respiratory distress. "I must go to her." For Dr. Shaffer it is true that "once a gentleman, always a gentleman"; and surely it is also true that "once a doctor, always a doctor."

Grant Fund Quickly Approaching Goal

The MHC continues to seek your support for the book tentatively titled "Health Care and Medical Education Comes to Columbus and Franklin County." The book is a collaboration begun by Barbara Van Brimmer and Dr. Charles Wooley. Dr. Wooley will complete the publication, assisted by the staff and collections of the Medical Heritage Center.

We have received \$17,735 in matching funds and only need \$2,265 to meet the Columbus Medical Association Foundation's challenge grant. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to this project, please indicate in a letter or on the check that the donation is for the **Medical Heritage Center Fund**. Make your check payable to the "Columbus Medical Association Foundation" and mail to:

The Columbus Medical Association Foundation
Attn: Weldon Milbourne
431 East Broad Street, Suite 300
Columbus OH 43216

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