

Florence E. Collins, MD

Texas claims the honor of having the first state medical organization to admit a woman into membership without a dissenting voice.

In 1887, Florence E. Collins, MD, the "lady applicant," was the first woman to join the Texas State Medical Association.

Early nursing schools in Texas were run by hospitals that established them without consistency in the quality of training. In 1909, Louise Dietrich led a crusade to pass a law standardizing nursing education. In 1923, the Nurse Practice Act was passed and Miss Dietrich was appointed to the first Texas Board of Nurse Examiners.

Irene S. Toland, MD, served with Roosevelt's Rough Riders as an army contract nurse in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. She died of typhoid fever on the hospital ship harbored at Santiago de Cuba, September 1898.

Irene S. Toland, MD

Harriet "Hallie" Earle, MD

Harriet "Hallie" Earle, MD, was the only woman in her graduating class in 1907 at Baylor University Medical School in Dallas. At the age of 40 in 1920, her income as a doctor was \$2,226.79. Dr. Earle carried a gun in her car when she made rural house calls. She was the first female physician in Waco in 1915, and

Ray K. Daily, MD, graduated from UTMB in 1913. She shared an ophthalmology practice with her husband and son and taught clinical ophthalmology at Baylor University College of Medicine in Houston. Dr. Daily was the first female vice president of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology.

Ray K. Daily, MD

Suffrage is a fact

Harriet Earle, MD

Claudia Potter, MD

Claudia Potter, MD, graduated from The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in 1904. She became a pioneer in her specialty, anesthesiology, and the first physician in Texas to use nitrous oxide as an anesthetic.

Marie Charlotte Schaefer, MD

Marie Charlotte Schaefer, MD, was born and raised in San Antonio. She graduated from UTMB in 1900 and went on to make many valuable contributions to the field of microscopy.

Dr. Schaefer standing at the rear of her laboratory class in 1912.

Students were "of good moral character, in good health, ... able to read and write, and do simple arithmetic."

Women in Texas Medicine

In the early days, women choosing a career in medicine had to overcome many of the same difficulties as men, but had the additional obstacle of gender bias. Most paid little attention to this prejudice and found strength in themselves and a desire to improve the world by tending to the sick and injured. These women had a passion for healing.

Many of these women have been "first" in some way. Some were native Texans, some from other countries, but the contributions made by all of these women make them true women pioneers in Texas medicine.

In Texas, women were never officially denied admission to medical school because of their gender. However, their presence was not always welcome. From the late 1800s until the 1960s, women physicians totaled only 5 percent of the medical profession.

Inequity in pay made a suffragette out of me

Minnie Fisher Cunningham

Sofie Herzog, MD

Minnie Fisher Cunningham

Once described as "a 21-year-old ball of fire," Minnie Fisher Cunningham was one of the first women in Texas to receive a pharmacy degree (UTMB, 1901). She served as president of the Texas Woman Suffrage Association from 1915 until the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in 1920 and ran for the U.S. Senate and for governor of Texas. This Huntsville pharmacist once said, "Inequity in pay made a suffragette out

Thanks to the efforts of some very determined women, the first training school for nurses in Texas opened in 1890 at John Sealy Hospital in Galveston.



Edith Bonnet, MD

Mary Cleveland Harper, MD, was a 1910 UTMB graduate and served as vice president of the Bexar County Medical Society in 1928. She practiced pediatrics in San Antonio with Edith Bonnet, MD, the first female resident at Galveston's John Sealy Hospital. Dr. Bonnet helped establish the Children's

Mary Cleveland Harper, MD

Mary Madison, a free black woman, was recorded as one of the first nurses in the history of the Republic of Texas, arriving in Galveston between 1841 and 1843.



Black nurse tending the sick at a contagion ward, 1910.

We can't wait for things to happen. We must make them happen.

May Owen, MD

May Owen, MD, changed the practice of surgery when she discovered that non-absorbable talcum powder used in surgical gloves could cause scar tissue when it fell into open wounds. Dr. Owen was the first female president of the Tarrant County Medical Society in 1947.



May Owen, MD



Connie Yerwood Connor, MD

Graduating from Meharry Medical College in 1933, Connie Yerwood Connor, MD, was a pioneer in public health as the first black physician to join the Texas Public Health Service. Dr. Connor was



Marie Delalondre Dietzel, MD

Marie Delalondre Dietzel, MD, and her UTMB classmates at their 50-year reunion in 1947. In Galveston, May 1896, The University of Texas President Leslie Waggener said, "The work of a doctor or surgeon is not work for a woman." He did not live to 1897 to see UTMB's first female graduate, Marie Delalondre Dietzel, MD, "... a modest and gentle lady, yet brave and independent."



Violet Keiller, MD

Violet Keiller, MD's father was the first anatomy professor at UTMB, and she was one of the few women studying under him. Shortly after her graduation in 1918, she became the first female pathologist at Hermann Hospital in Houston.



Clotilde Garcia, MD

Clotilde Garcia, MD, became one of the first Mexican-American women to earn a medical degree in 1954 and to practice in Corpus Christi. This "doctor of the barrio" was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame for her service to the medical profession and to the needs of the Mexican-American people.

When a woman went into labor, my grandmother would jump on her horse and ride to help that woman. I believe she delivered more babies than the doctors did.

Ruth Hartgraves, MD



Ruth Hartgraves, MD

Ruth Hartgraves, MD's grandmother inspired her to become a doctor. In 1956, Dr. Hartgraves was president of the Houston chapter of the American Medical Women's Association, a group dedicated to the recruitment of women physicians in wartime to provide public health services.



Thelma Patten Law.

In 1921, it was almost impossible for a black woman to gain admittance to a medical school in the South. Born in Huntsville, Texas, and raised in Houston, Thelma Patten Law, MD, traveled north to receive her medical degree from Howard University but returned to Houston to open an obstetrics and gynecology practice.



Alice McPherson, MD

By 1957, Alice McPherson, MD, became the world's first full-time retinal specialist and a pioneer in the field of ophthalmology. In 1969, she founded the Retina Research Foundation, the world's leading organization for retinal disease.



Ruth Bain, MD

Ruth Bain, MD, graduated from UTMB in 1942, just at the time the country was contemplating war. She was elected the second female president of the Texas Medical Association in 1982.

Houston anesthesiologist Betty Stephenson, MD, was elected president of the Texas Medical Association in 1994.



Betty Stephenson, MD



Nancy Dickey, MD

Nancy Dickey, MD, the first female president of the American Medical Association, serves as president and vice chancellor for health affairs at The Texas A&M University System Health Science Center.



The Texas Medical Association thanks the following for their generous contributions to the TMA Special Funds Foundation that made possible this exciting exhibit: "Women in Texas Medicine." *Former:* Champion Texas Medical Association Insurance Trust Texas Medical Foundation Texas Medical Liability Trust Texas Medical Association Alliance - Escrow: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas - HCA the Healthcare Company Patton Alton Laboratories Kelsey-Seybold Clinic MENA America Memorial Hermann Health Care Systems.

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