In honor of the Ettinger-Dreyfuss chair now being developed, we reprint the following article by the late Jack R. Dreyfuss from the American College of Radiology Bulletin, June 1984.

Alice Ettinger

In awarding a gold medal to Alice Ettinger, the American College of Radiology recognizes and honors the extraordinary accomplishments of the "Grande Dame" of American radiology. Born in Berlin, Germany, in 1899, just four years after Roentgen's momentous discovery, her life has literally spanned the entire conception and development of radiology as a preeminent medical specialty.

In her 60-year professional career, Dr. Ettinger has brought distinction to this specialty and to herself as a supremely competent clinician, radiologist, administrator, and educator, and also as a role model for generations of medical students who have held her in adoration.

Dr. Ettinger graduated from the Chamisso Gymnasium in Berlin in 1919. From 1919 to 1924 she attended medical school at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin and then the Albert Ludwig University in Freiburg. Her initial plan was to train in internal medicine and from 1925 to 1928 she served as an intern and as a resident at the Berlin-Moabit City Hospital and at the Charité Hospital, also in Berlin. During this training in medicine, Dr. Ettinger developed a deep concern for her patients and felt that she could better manage their care if she learned something of the capabilities of the newest of the diagnostic modalities — radiology. At that time, Dr. Hans Heinrich Berg, an internist and gastroenterologist, had developed great personal expertise in radiology at his clinic in Frankfurt and later at the Charité Hospital in Berlin. Dr. Ettinger applied to him for six months of training, but Dr. Berg was reluctant to accept a female trainee. However, he finally agreed, and Dr. Ettinger found such excitement in this new specialty and Dr. Berg was so pleased with her ability, that the six months was extended to two-and-a-half years of intensive training in radiology.

It was at this point that German radiology and American medicine came together to have a most profound impact on the future career of Alice Ettinger. In Boston, Dr. Joseph Pratt was the physician-in-chief of the ancient and honorable Boston Dispensary. He had received his postgraduate training in Germany and after returning to Boston, had kept in touch with his European colleagues. In 1932, he wrote a letter to his friend, Professor Morawitz, in Leipzig, to ask what was new in German medicine. Dr. Morawitz replied that a Dr. Berg in Berlin had revolutionized gastrointestinal X-ray studies by inventing a fluoroscopic machine that could take instantaneous spot-films of the stomach and duodenum during a barium examination. In addition, he told Dr. Pratt that Dr. Berg had devised a mucosal-relief technique for studying the interior of the upper GI tract, a technique that had greatly advanced the ability to diagnose peptic disease and to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment.

Dr. Pratt resolved at once to intro-
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Dr. Ettinger developed a deep concern for her patients and felt that she could better manage their care if she learned something of the capabilities of the newest of the diagnostic modalities — radiology.

Dr. Ettinger was indeed the professional mother of modern gastrointestinal radiology in this country. These two institutions eventually became part of the New England Center Hospital and later of the New England Medical Center, with Dr. Ettinger as chief of radiology. Yet another first was added to her record in 1959 when she was made professor and chairman of the Department of Radiology — again the first woman to hold such an appointment in an American medical school.

Dr. Ettinger also worked to advance the level of radiology in New England, and especially in the state of Maine. In 1947, The Bingham Associates Fund, a charitable foundation dedicated to improving the quality of medical care in Mr. Bingham's home state, asked Dr. Ettinger to survey existing radiology facilities in Maine, particularly in small towns and rural areas. After an exploratory trip through the state with a team of consultants, she drew up a list of recommendations and set about to implement them. The Bingham Fund agreed to underwrite the program and to sponsor the employment of a full-time consultant, who for the next several years travelled throughout the state in response to numerous requests from hospitals and private offices to have their facilities surveyed. In each case, improvements were made in radiological safety, equipment, and technique. With this heightening of the level of radiologic services, there also followed an enhancement of overall medical care available to the citizens of Maine.

Many students have said that they consider Dr. Ettinger's course the best rotation of their medical-school years, as evidenced by the unbroken string of teaching awards she has received every year since 1970.

Truly, Alice Ettinger is one of the few clinician-teachers who has been at the frontier of medical knowledge and yet, after 60 years of practice, can still provide a model for students and residents in the compassionate and expert care of patients — the rich reward of a lifetime of striving for excellence.