Ettinger: Legacy of Excellence

As NEMC celebrates its 200th anniversary in 1996, the Quarterly looks back at the contributions of some of its early clinicians. This profile features one of the many female physicians who left their mark on the institution and medicine.

During the early 1930s, Joseph Pratt, M.D., Physician-in-chief of the Boston Dispensary, looked to Europe to help strengthen the hospital's clinical and research programs. During several visits to Germany, he was impressed with the outstanding reputations of the German physicians and urged some of them to come to Boston. One of the first to accept the invitation was Alice Ettinger, M.D., who arrived in 1932.

Ettinger was 53 years old when she came to the Dispensary to implement a new x-ray technology she and a German colleague, Hans Heinrich Berg, M.D., had developed. She planned to stay at NEMC for six months. Instead, she remained for more than a half century, helping to launch this country into modern gastrointestinal radiology and becoming one of America's leading radiologists.

Ettinger brought to NEMC the spot-film device she helped develop that furthers the use of fluoroscopy. Fluoroscopy employs "real time" images that allow the body to be viewed in motion. Sometimes dye injections are used to help view the x-ray; in other cases, the body provides its own contrast. The spot-film device records an examination during a procedure, which can then be used for further study.

"It is one thing to see inside the human body," says Alan Greenfield, M.D., chief of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology. "Dr. Ettinger gave us the ability to prove what we see with fluoroscopy. Without fluoroscopy, techniques performed daily, including angiograms, angioplasty and catheterizations, could not take place.

In 1939, Ettinger became radiologist-in-chief at the Boston Dispensary. "Alice felt strongest about excellent patient care," says Barbara Carter, M.D., chief of ENT radiology, who was a co-worker and close friend of Ettinger for more than 30 years. "She was a good clinician because she cared so much. If any abnormality was found during testing she would review it with a fine-tooth comb, checking with every available referring physician," Carter says. Often, Ettinger arrived early in the morning to review the day's cases, making sure she knew all the patients' names and histories.

As professor and chair of Radiology at Tufts University School of Medicine (TuSOM), Ettinger gained a reputation among the medical students because of her quick wit and extraordinary teaching skills. Year after year, she was voted "favorite professor." In 1965, Ettinger retired as chairwoman, but continued as an active clinician and teacher. She died in 1995, leaving NEMC and Tufts a legacy of excellence.

Devotion, Hard Work Pay Off

More than 500 NEMC employees were praised for their dedication, talent, hard work and loyalty to NEMC in May at the annual employee recognition banquet. Almost 200 employees with 10 or more years of service attended the banquet at the Tremont House. Topping the list of long-time employees was Margaret Iula of Finance, who has been with NEMC for 35 years. Another long-time employee, Harley Gordon of Dietetics, has not missed one day of work in the patient kitchen in 30 years. Among those who thanked workers for their dedication were President and Chief Executive Officer Thomas O'Donnell, M.D., Chief Medical Officer Deeb Salem, M.D., and Board member William Saltonstall.
Cosmetic Skin Surgery
A multidisciplinary group of physicians involved with the Center for Cosmetic Skin Surgery recently discussed surgical options and healthy skin care techniques available at NEMC. They include laser resurfacing of acne scars, liposuction, collagen and goretex implants, glycolic acid chemical peels, facelifts, chin implants and nasal reconstruction. Participating were Michael Kaminer, M.D., Dermatologist; Janice Washburn, M.D., Dermatologist; Brian Biesman, M.D., New England Eye Center; and Donald Annino, M.D., Otolaryngology. The Center for Cosmetic Surgery can be reached at ext. 5517.

External Affairs and Development
Sarah Jackson and model in recent fashion show benefit
Thirty young patients from the Floating Children's Cancer Center started at the Fashioned for Life children's fashion show held aboard the Royal Princess charter yacht docked at Rowes Wharf. The youngsters modeled clothes from Talbots and Talbots Kids and were accompanied by models from Models, Inc. of Boston. All proceeds from the show will help support the center.

Clinical Care Research
The Cam Neely Nike Celebrity Golf Classic, which was held in June, raised more than $100,000 to benefit the Cam Neely Foundation. The foundation is building the Neely House at NEMC, which will provide housing and support services for families of adult and pediatric cancer patients undergoing treatment at the hospital. The fund-raising dinner and golf tournament, held at The Ridge Club in Sandwich, Mass., were sold out. An auction, emceed by Billy Costa of KISS108, was held on the golf course. At Neely's invitation, patients of the Floating Hospital came to watch. Participating celebrities included Boston Bruins members Don Sweeney and Adam Oates; Boston Red Sox pitcher Roger Clemens; New England Patriots player Sam Gash; actor Alan Thicke; actor/comedian Dave Coulier; and local comedian Steve Sweeney.

Otolaryngology
The Voice Center, which opens at NEMC this summer, will provide state-of-the-art evaluation and treatment for a wide gamut of voice problems and disorders. It will be located on the third floor of the South Building. Otolaryngologist-in-Chief Stanley Shapshay, M.D., is the medical director of the new center; and Jo-Ann Ross will serve as voice specialist speech pathologist. The center will offer services to professional voice users such as performers, educators, attorneys, sales people and corporate executives, as well as others with voice problems. For more information, call Jo-Ann Ross, at ext. 5300.

Pediatrics
The Floating Hospital for Children has expanded its community outreach programs in collaboration with several community hospitals and physicians throughout Massachusetts. These programs include expanded specialty services at Beverly Hospital, encompassing cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, neurology, pulmonology/allergy and surgery. In addition, pediatric residents will be assigned to the hospital as part of their training. NEMC has also opened a new medical office suite on Highland Avenue in Salem, for specialty services in adolescent medicine, cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, and pulmonology. The Floating Hospital will offer Level II nursery programs at Lawrence General Hospital and at Holy Family Medical Center in Methuen. It is also offering new Pediatric Gastroenterology/Nutrition satellite services at Faulkner, Lawrence Memorial and Lowell General hospitals. New Floating Hospital clinical genetics and pediatric neurology services are available at Good Samaritan Medical Center in Brockton and St. Anne's Hospital in Fall River. New pediatric rheumatology services are now available at Cranberry Medical Specialties Clinic on Cape Cod.

Pediatric Cardiology
Zyad M. Hijazi, M.D., F.A.C., director of the Pediatric Cardiac Catheterization Lab at the Floating Hospital, helped develop a new stent for the treatment of coronary artery disease. He and Angio-dynamics, a division of E-Z-EM, Inc., have developed "AngioStent," a newly designed tool used to widen and keep open narrowed vessels. Unlike most stents, the AngioStent is made of platinum and is easily visible on X-ray, allowing for more accurate placement. Coronary artery disease results when clogged arteries limit the blood flow to the heart. The AngioStent is delivered to the obstructed artery by a balloon-expandable system guided by a catheter. Once implanted, the physician removes the delivery balloon and the stent remains.

Advisory group members include Dan Bird, Volunteer Resources; Carol Endcott, Operations; Judy Luce, U.I.C.S.W., Social Work Services; and Cheryl Freedman and Bob Sheehan, Educational Media.

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