

Supt's Corner



By Charles H. Frenzel

Good public relations is the life's blood of any service organization. To a hospital it is particularly important as the success of its operation depends almost entirely upon public acceptance of its services. Public relations, unlike public information, cannot be purchased; it must be earned. The Public Information Bureau of Duke University has done an excellent job in placing before our public the accomplishments and the services of the Medical Center. Several excellent releases have been made recently by the Public Information Bureau dealing with our Out-Patient Department operation, the annual report of services rendered to patients at Duke Hospital, and with the developments in various areas of medical research. These releases have played a major part in putting the story of the Duke University Medical Center before the potential clientele of our institution, but they can never substitute for good public relations.

The greatest single tool for developing public relations for the Medical Center must be our personnel. The treatment that patients, relatives, and visitors receive from each member of our staff and the attitude of our staff towards the services that are rendered in the Medical Center will pretty much determine the public relations that our institution has.

The rapid growth of the Medical Center in the past twenty-nine years has brought about a tremendous increase in our reputation and prestige. But at the same time, it has changed us from a small, compact institution in which everyone on the staff not only knew but understood the function of everyone else. We have become a large, complex, multi-disci-

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New Switchboard in Operation

At midnight September 5 the new University telephone switchboard was put into operation. After a "shake-down" period a traffic study will be made to determine necessary adjustments.

During the first days of use, service was slowed by the fact that all numbers had been changed. In addition switchboard operators use a different method for ringing numbers on the new equipment. Duke subscribers note these changes: new numbers—all in four digits—have been assigned; to dial numbers in the city of Durham, the Duke subscriber must dial 9 and wait for a second dial tone; to call long-distance the Duke subscriber now dials 0. (This last change makes the Duke switchboard consistent with the city system.)

To increase efficiency of service Duke subscribers who do not know the number they wish to call are requested to dial 14. This will connect the subscriber with Information—two positions on the switchboard are especially equipped to give this service—and avoid tying up other lines. For similar reasons Hospital subscribers requesting paging should dial 13.

The new equipment differs from the usual switchboard equipment in that numbers are called by a key pulsing system instead of by dialing. The operator presses keys—numbered like the old dial—much as she would operate a typewriter or adding machine. Before the new switchboard was opened, two Duke operators were taken to observe the 20-position key pulse switchboard in Dalton, Georgia. Others had practice periods on the Duke board. When an operator becomes efficient, four numbers can be pressed in the time required to dial one. The automatic equipment of the switchboard is known as the cross-bar switching system—the type now being installed as rapidly as possible by the Bell System and its subsidiaries.

Privately owned and operated by

Duke University, the switchboard services the University community. Duke operators handle an average of 7,000 calls a day. Calls handled automatically by direct dialing—i.e., those made within the Duke telephone system or by Duke subscribers to the Durham system—are not included in this count. Location of the switchboard in Duke Hospital helps assure the night-time telephone, paging and information service necessary to the Hospital. By installing the new equipment in space adjacent to the old, it was possible to make the change without interruption of service. The old equipment will now be removed, and the space it occupied restored to the Hospital. The new board increases operator positions from four to six. The big advantage to be gained by installation of this new equipment is that additional equipment for future expansion can be more readily planned and installed. The old equipment—vintage 1930—was bulky and so out-dated that additions had to be specially engineered. Even though the automatic switchboard equipment is in operation, additional service throughout the University buildings will, in many cases, require installation of cables from the switchboard to the location needing service. This will take time.

Kentucky Appoints Williams

Wayne C. Williams, Duke University medical illustrator, has been appointed director of the Medical Illustration Department at the University of Kentucky's new Medical Center in Lexington. He will officially assume his post November 1. He has been a Duke Medical Center staff member since 1954 and is currently senior illustrator in the teaching film unit of the anatomy department. He was a free lance commercial artist before joining the Duke staff.