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DURHAM, N. C.

Pediatrics on the Move

The opening this week of Duke Medical Center's symposium on "The Commonwealth of Children" climaxes a 30-year period of proud growth and development of the Department of Pediatrics under the leadership of the beloved pediatrician, retired Dean Wilburt C. Davison. This symposium and the recent completion of the beautiful, modern Howland Ward for children belie the modest beginnings of this department in 1929.

As Dr. Jerome S. Harris, chairman of the department of pediatrics, tells the story, "In the beginning there was a dean. And the dean said 'Let there be a department of pediatrics.'" And so began this important service whose reputation goes hand and hand with the rewarding career of Dr. Davison, in whose honor this symposium is being given.

Back in the early days the department consisted of Dr. Davison, part time assistance from Dr. Arthur London, one resident and one intern. These doctors of necessity and orientation conducted a general type of service for acutely sick children. Out-patient clinics were held only three afternoons a week and were never overcrowded. Today a greatly enlarged staff operates a service geared largely to the referrals of children with special problems from a wide surrounding area. The Pediatric Service last year had 1400 admissions to their ward, gave 1200 newborn babies a healthy start in life and had 17,000 out-patient visits.

Such growth was by no means an overnight affair. The department grew slowly and steadily as the population of children increased and as more knowledge of disease processes became available and pediatricians with interests in these new fields joined the staff.

In 1932 Dr. Angus McBryde joined

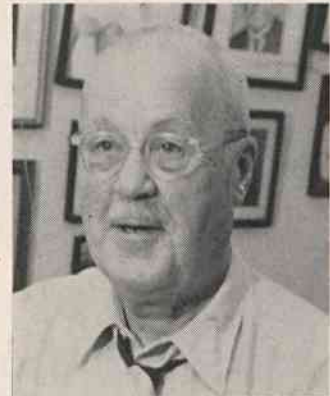
the staff, followed three years later by Dr. Jay Arena. In 1937 Dr. Harris came to the department as the first full-time teaching member of the team, with special interest in the metabolic aspects of pediatrics. Two years later Dr. Susan Dees, whose interests are in allergic diseases, arrived. These doctors formed the nucleus of the department, with a gradually increasing number of house staff officers, until after the second world war.

By that time the advancing knowledge in the pediatric subspecialties necessitated more additions to the staff. In 1951 Dr. William DeMaria became the kidney disease specialist. Dr. Doris Howell came in 1955 as the hematologist. In 1957 and 1958 Drs. Madison Spach and Robert Stempfel joined the staff with respective interests in pediatric cardiology and endocrinology. This year Dr. James B. Sidbury, Jr. joined the staff as associate professor (and director of Duke's new Clinical Research Unit) with interests in the biochemistry of diseases of children.

As the staff increased, specialty clinics were added. By 1949 these included clinics in child guidance, convulsive disorders, allergy, heart disease and kidney disease. At about this same time Dr. McBryde supervised the establishment of Duke's premature center which was one of the first in the area with teaching facilities. This center served as a model for teaching premature nurseries for many years and is still a very important part of the pediatric program at Duke Hospital.

Another big step for the department was the establishment, through the dedicated interest of Dr. Arena, of the Poison Control Center in 1954.

(Continued on page 6)



Dr. Wilburt C. Davison, retired Dean of Duke Medical School and Professor of Pediatrics.



Miss Mildred M. Sherwood, R. N., retired supervisor of nurses for the pediatric service.



Dr. Jerome S. Harris, chairman of the department of pediatrics.