



**PICKING UP A SPECIMEN**—Messenger Wyman Hardy takes a specimen from Medical P. D. C. to be delivered to one of several dozen labs throughout the Medical Center. (photo by Dave Hooks)



**ON THE PHONE—AGAIN**—Daniel Washington, messenger service supervisor, and Mrs. Dorothy Hester, secretary, take another request to transport a patient to a laboratory. (photo by Dave Hooks)

### Third in a Series

## Messengers—A Vital Link

The phone rings on an average of once every two minutes all day long.

That's nearly 1,200 calls a week, 60,000 in a year.

And each time, a girl answers "Messenger Service," and a few minutes later one of the 18 Medical Center messengers is off on another trip through the hospital.

Messenger service at Duke is the department responsible for moving more than 90 per cent of the patients in the hospital from wards to clinics, laboratories, and special procedure sections such as EEG. Messengers also pick up and deliver a variety of specimens to several dozen laboratories throughout the Medical Center.

"Our employes probably know more about the hospital than anyone else," Daniel Washington, messenger service supervisor, said. "We spend about a month teaching new people all areas of the Medical Center so they can pick up and take something almost anywhere."

Though usually the messengers transport patients or specimens, they've been called upon to move everything from stacks of *Intercoms* to pieces of furniture and light machinery. "I wish I'd kept a list of the unusual things we've moved over the years," Mr. Washington said. "It would be interesting reading."

In addition to moving patients from place to place within the hospital, the messengers aid patients at admission and discharge with getting luggage and other

personal possessions to and from the entrances. Messengers meet each patient using the wheelchair entrance and take them to their rooms or to the appropriate clinic.

The messengers are not limited to trips within the main hospital. They often travel to Bell Building, the Veterans Administration Hospital, and the Nana-line H. Duke Building carrying specimens to special laboratories.

At present there are ten women and eight men serving as messengers on the staff in addition to Mr. Washington and secretary. "When I took over the department three years ago, we had only 13 messengers," he said, "but we have grown to 18 because of the work load. Many of the employes who were here when I became supervisor have advanced to other positions."

Fifteen former messengers still work at the hospital, most of them as PCA's. Others are in the pharmacy, the medical outpatient clinic, second-floor X-ray and on the wards as secretaries.

The department, whose headquarters is on the ground floor near radiation therapy, includes Miss Marion Armstrong, Mrs. Hassie Carmichael, Mrs. Alice Cash, Leroy Davis, William Ferrell, Mrs. Olivia Green, Wyman Hardy, Mrs. Dorothy Hester, Mrs. Patricia Howard, Andrew Little, Miss Sandra McNeil, Miss Lila Richmond, Miss Alice Roberts, Miss Diane Rogers, Miss Nellie Thompson, James Thorpe, and Herman Watson.



**OFF TO THE CLINIC**—Messenger Olivia Green of the hospital staff takes Frances Surles, a patient at the Medical Center, from her room to the Surgical P. D. C. Messengers also transport patients in wheelchairs or on stretchers if necessary. (photo by Dave Hooks)