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Missionary Work in Vietnam

Nursing Grad Helps Vietnamese Refugees



HELPING OTHERS HELP THEMSELVES—For eight of the past 11 years, Rachel James, a Baptist missionary in Vietnam, has ministered to the medical needs of Vietnamese refugees in Saigon and outlying districts. Rachel has done most of her work at chapel clinics, which she helped to establish, and has taken care of, on any given day, as many as 100 to 120 refugee patients. A 1958 graduate of the School of Nursing, Rachel and her family will return to Vietnam in June, after spending two years back home in Durham.

Duke To Implement New Clinical Scholar Program

A new type of physician, capable of and willing to take a leadership role in improving the nation's health care delivery system, is being trained at Duke under a new graduate training program in medicine.

Duke's Clinical Scholar Program will be supported by grants from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Awards will go to young doctors interested in careers in developing and managing major health systems and educational programs.

"These people will have a combination of talents and sensitivities no other group would have," said Dr. William R. Harlan, program director. "They're going to have to be good at two things. First, they'll be board-qualified, skilled clinicians with experience caring for the individual patient. Then they will be people qualified in planning and administration with a concern for the health care system as a whole.

"Hopefully these physicians will bring with them a different outlook," Harlan said, "the same way the physician-scientist brings to research some sensitivities that the biochemist with a Ph.D. doesn't have."

The Johnson Foundation has committed \$5.9 million to the program at eight to 12 medical schools across the nation in the next four years. For the fiscal year 73-74, Duke will receive \$96,000 to support four to six scholars.

The Clinical Scholar Program began

three years ago as a pilot program at five of North America's leading medical schools—Duke, Case Western Reserve, Johns Hopkins, Stanford and McGill. Funds for the experimental program were provided by the Commonwealth Fund and the Carnegie Corp. Duke has graduated eleven clinical scholars during the pilot program.

The new national program will be based on the pilot projects and will be administered by a 15-member national board. Two Duke administrators—Dr. Eugene Stead, professor of medicine, and Dr. James B. Wyngaarden, chairman of the Department of Medicine—will serve on the board.

Dr. John C. Beck, currently chairman of the Department of Medicine at McGill University in Montreal, will be director of the program.

Harlan said the Duke program during the experimental phase has been a one-year program, but it will eventually be expanded to two years. Those accepted into the program must have finished medical school, an internship year and one year of residency in some clinical specialty.

The proposed core curriculum for the program includes three to five months of seminars on such topics as the economics of health care, evaluation of manpower needs, epidemiology, and computer use. The second phase of the training program

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When Rachel Kerr was a student at Duke, walking to class along tree-lined walkways and absorbing the knowledge that would be turned into nursing skills, Vietnam was just a place on the other side of the world.

But today, when Vietnam is on the front page of every newspaper, few people know the Vietnamese or understand their needs better than she.

For eight of the past 11 years Rachel Kerr James, a 1958 graduate of the School of Nursing, has devoted most of her time and energy to caring for Vietnamese refugees in Saigon. When Rachel, her husband and three children left for Vietnam in 1962, they were the sixth mission family to be approved by the Foreign Mission Board of the Baptist Church to work there.

Rachel's inspiration for and dedication to her missionary work has grown out of a deep-seeded love for her religion and a genuine desire to help those in need. "At the age of 14, I had decided to become a nurse. I had heard about missionary work through my mother and local church and was inspired, at an early age, to yield my life to the Lord to be used wherever He wants me to be used...It was then, when I was 14 years old, that I began my pilgrimage."

In 1953 Rachel James entered the School of Nursing and in her sophomore year met her husband, Sam, who had served in the Navy in Korea and had brought refugees on his ship from Haiphong in the North of Vietnam to Saigon in the South. While Rachel was a student at Duke and Sam a student at Wake Forest, they both had decided to become missionaries and were interested in serving in the Orient.

After graduation, Rachel worked as a staff nurse at Duke until 1962 when she left with her family for Vietnam. After awaiting entry visas to Vietnam in Hong Kong, Rachel, Sam and their three children entered the country in 1962 to spend 16 months in the mountains of Dalat. There, surrounded by pine trees, waterfalls and deserted beaches, in a climate described as "perpetual spring," the Jameses learned the "tonal" language of the Vietnamese.

During their first trip to Vietnam, which ended in 1966 when they took a furlough leave for one year to return home, the James family lived in a small city called Thu Duc, just eight miles

north of Saigon.

While Sam worked as a pastor at a Vietnamese church and also served as interim pastor in a Chinese church, Rachel took care of her three children and those of her neighbor's. She made use of her nursing skills by doing volunteer work in the GYN Clinic of the Navy Hospital. When the American Embassy was bombed in 1965, she took care of the women that were injured before they were sent home.

Her volunteer work continued when the Navy left Vietnam and she worked in the Orthopaedic Clinic of the Third Field Army Hospital, interpreting for the Vietnamese patients.

Aside from establishing relationships with other American missionary groups, the Jameses came into contact with civilian Americans working for major oil companies in Saigon. There were 15 civilian nurses connected with these companies and Rachel worked closely with them in offering her nursing skills.

When it came to the education of her three children, she played a large role in developing the Phoenix Study School which was established when the local community school was closed in 1965 during the evacuation.

According to Rachel, the evacuation took its toll on "over 100 American children, not to mention Chinese and Vietnamese English-speaking children, who needed schooling. So, we developed the Phoenix Study School, which is really a mini-school. Parents rented the building and we have first through eighth grades. Some of the company wives are teachers.

"Most mission children go away to school after the eighth grade, but those who remain at home take correspondence courses through the University of Nebraska, a program designed for American children living out of the country where an American school is not convenient."

When the Jameses returned to Saigon in 1967 their command over the Vietnamese language and firm confidence in their special purpose in helping others, were incentives enough to call them back to their home away from home.

During the following four years they established a theological seminary, designed to train young Vietnamese men and women. Sam headed the seminary and saw its first students, two pastors and

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Monday, May 28

Memorial Day

Holiday

