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Lincoln Health Planner Schmidt Believes

Practicality Is Essential for Quality Patient Care



OPEN WIDE NOW—Project director of Lincoln Community Health Center since 1971, Pediatrician Dr. Evelyn Schmidt spends a couple of hours a week at the center's clinic and satellite facility in Rougemont/Bahama examining children. She believes that a physician must look at the "total patient," that is "not just as a person who comes into your office, but also as a member of a home, a community and a work environment." (Photo by Dale Moses)

"We have let a lot of medicine go down the drain because on paper it looks very good.

"You make the right diagnosis; you do a beautiful history and physical; you make this great plan; and you're self-satisfied. But there is one thing missing in your work—the element of practicality."

Those are the words of Dr. Evelyn Schmidt, project director of Lincoln Community Health Center in Durham—a physician who believes it's essential to look at the "total patient."

"Many people today, including myself," she said, "feel that in evaluating the quality of patient care there has to be some visible results from the patient's point of view. We ask, for example, 'What has the effect of all this been for the patient in terms of his health?'"

"When you begin answering that question," Dr. Schmidt said, "it means that you have taken a look at a patient, not just as a person who comes into your office, but also as a member of a home, a community and a work environment."

In the course of a day's work at Lincoln, Dr. Schmidt takes a look at a lot of patients and examines the total set of circumstances that brings a specific patient to a doctor's attention.

And whatever she's doing at the moment—talking about community medicine, planning a health fair, seeing a patient at Lincoln or recalling her medical student days at Duke just after World War II—Dr. Schmidt puts herself totally into the project, and at a pace that leaves the unconditioned follower trailing behind.

Pediatrician, educator, administrator and a firm believer in primary health care programs which offer a full array of preventive, maintenance and therapeutic health services, Dr. Schmidt began her association with Duke and the Durham communities more than 30 years ago.

Born and raised in New York, Dr. Schmidt came to "the South" in 1943 to enroll as an undergraduate at Duke. Following her college training, she entered Duke's School of Medicine in 1947, thus making a first step (many of which were to follow) in fulfilling a life-long dream to become a physician.

As one of six entering female medical students in a class of 72, Dr. Schmidt looks back in amusement and recalls those days at Duke when females were provided with less than adequate facilities and corresponding responsibilities in carrying out their work.

For example, she remembers that female students were not allowed to live in the graduate dormitory because the "genteel sex" were considered "undesirable" and had to find living quarters outside of the campus in Durham.

The existence of only one bathroom allocated for females in the hospital at that time also posed some interesting problems. "As medical students," Dr. Schmidt noted, "we had to provide specimens, and there we were with our jugs, running down to the first floor near

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Radiology Department's David Page Helps Students Create Documentary

On a clear day, the church steeple at Portsmouth village shimmers across the waters of Ocracoke Inlet, a silent landmark for a place rarely visited by the crowds of tourists who annually visit North Carolina's historic Outer Banks.

It wasn't always that way, so quiet and broodingly still at Portsmouth. The village, which lies approximately 25 miles northeast of the medical center's Sea Level Hospital, once was home for hundreds of North Carolinians who preferred living by the capricious Atlantic rather than on the mainland.

Portsmouth's importance during the Revolutionary War is mentioned in the history books, for in those days Ocracoke Inlet favored the little village. But the inlet and the sailing ships that used it gradually shifted toward Ocracoke Village four miles away, and Portsmouth faded into oblivion after the Civil War.

Today, nobody lives there permanently. But despite the periodic indignancies visited upon them by vandals and weather, the old Methodist church and several houses belonging to people who were born and lived much of their adult lives in Portsmouth are kept in good repair.

Memories of this village which was once the chief seaport along the Atlantic Outer Banks and of the island's early inhabitants who were independent enough to secede from North Carolina when North Carolina seceded from the Union are being rekindled and preserved through a documentary film conceived by David Page, a photographic engineer in the Department of Radiology's Radiation Physics section.

The film, which is in color and will run approximately 15 minutes in length, has been created by a group of Duke students headed by anthropology major Bill Schmidheiser.

Page, who is serving as narrator, part-time cameraman and technical director for the documentary, first

became interested in the island two years ago while studying an old map of North Carolina.

He said he noticed the name Portsmouth between Cape Lookout and Cape Hatteras and, desiring to know about the village and the island as a

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WRECK OF THE "JOHN I. SNOW"—The skeleton of the *John I. Snow* has been lying on Portsmouth Island since 1907, when the merchant vessel came ashore during a storm. Its cargo, salvaged by the people of the island, included all kinds of men's and women's wearing apparel, a complete hotel which was to be erected in New York and the first automobile to leave tracks on Portsmouth's sandy streets. David Page, a photographic engineer in the Department of Radiology's Radiation Physics section, has been helping Duke students make a documentary film about the island's history and future. (Photo by David Page)