



Duke University Medical Center Intercom

VOL. 25, NO. 26

JUNE 30, 1978

DURHAM, N.C.



SUMMER IN BLOOM — Twenty-three weeks ago, a photo in this space showed a closeup of a tree branch clothed in the ice of January. An example of June fashions for medical center trees is this blossom, one of many adorning the large magnolia tree outside the Davison Building. (Photo by Parker Herring)

Ancient symbol for medicine associated with son of Apollo

By John Becton

A new practice using an ancient symbol was begun at this year's Hippocratic Oath Ceremony.

At the head of the procession, the marshal carried the staff of Aesculapius, which has been associated with medicine since the days of ancient Greece.

"We felt that some symbolic representation would be appropriate during the Hippocratic Oath Ceremony. Most academic events do have one or more symbols," Dr. Ewald W. Busse, dean of medical and allied health education, said. He and Ort Busse, his wife, had presented the staff to the medical school earlier in the year.

The staff was fashioned by Charles Earnhardt of the House of Joseph in Boone.

Nearly 6,000 years ago

"The symbol of the serpent and the staff actually first appeared in scrolls in Mesopotamia as long ago as 3,800 B.C.," Busse said. "From then on, it shows up over and again in history."

Mesopotamian legend also held that the staff was originally part of the "Tree of Life."

The staff of Aesculapius is the "one-snake" staff, as distinguished from the "two-snake" staff, the Caduceus or the Wand of Hermes.

The Aesculapian staff is considered by many to be a more appropriate choice as a symbol for medicine since it is associated exclusively with the history of medicine, while the Caduceus is historically associated with commerce and communications. Its utilization as a symbol by the non-combatant services of armed forces has led relatively recently to its use in a medical connotation.

Snakes useful

"Snakes probably became a symbol of the cycle of life because of their ability to survive the winter, shed their old skin and reappear in the spring," Busse pointed out.

"The ancient Greeks kept certain snakes in their homes to keep down rodents and insects. So they were seen as useful creatures," he said.

The non-venomous serpent of Aesculapius was a type of python, which was one of these useful snakes.

(Continued on page 3)

Preserving life continues in off-duty hours

(The following was rewritten from a report by Loyd Little in the Durham Morning Herald.)

Quick work by an off-duty Duke nurse and a student in the Physician's Associate (PA) Program was credited recently with saving the life of a woman at Northgate Mall.

Jennie Mayfield, a nurse in the emergency room, and Debby Teplin, a PA student, were eating at the Salads 'N' Such restaurant when they noticed Ethel Wilkins of Sanford having difficulty.

In spite of immediate aid, Wilkins stopped breathing and the young women were unable to feel a pulse. However, after a few minutes of special emergency techniques, Wilkins' heart was beating again and she was breathing on her own by the time an ambulance arrived.

Tried Heimlich technique

Here is an account of the incident from Teplin:

"We were having lunch when I noticed a woman at another table seemed to be choking on her food. We ran to her and began the Heimlich technique."

(That technique involves a person putting their arms around the victim, just below the sternum and squeezing to force air up through the esophagus.)

Restored pulse, breathing

"That didn't seem to do much good. In fact, she had quit breathing, was turning blue and we couldn't find a pulse. Then, Jennie began an external heart massage, while I gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

"Within three or four minutes, her pulse was going again and she began breathing."

When the ambulance arrived, Wilkins was given oxygen and attached to an electrocardiogram machine.

Teplin, who will graduate on July 30 from the PA Program, said this was the third time she had been involved in such an incident, outside of her routine hospital work.

She said the first time occurred when she was visiting her sister in Bronx, N.Y. and a next-door neighbor collapsed. Teplin said she applied cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the man eventually came around and lived.

The second time was when a man suddenly collapsed in the radiology

department at Duke. "I was the only person around, so I gave him CPR until an emergency team got there," she said. This man also lived.

"I'm beginning to feel fated," she said.

Teplin, 26, is a native of Irvington, N.Y., and said she already has a job in the emergency room of Montegiore Hospital in the Bronx after her graduation in July.

Mayfield, 28, is a Missouri native, but has been living in Chapel Hill and working at Duke Hospital for the past two years.



Tennis pros big fans of CF research

A Duke scientist began her Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CFF) research this month with a cheering section of 200 top tennis players from throughout the world.

Dr. Mary Callaghan Rose, a research associate in the Departments of Medicine and Biochemistry, has been awarded a \$20,550 CFF research grant, the third funded by the Association for Tennis Professionals (ATP) since 1972. The ATP was established that year and adopted the CFF as its official charity.

One of about 70 scientists receiving CFF research awards this year, Rose is trying to determine the cause of the abnormally thick and sticky mucus that is secreted in the lungs and digestive system of children and adults with cystic fibrosis, a hereditary disease which is incurable and ultimately fatal.

Besides disturbing breathing, the abnormal mucus which clogs the respiratory system of individuals with cystic fibrosis creates an environment

(Continued on page 4)



NEXT? — Patients find the new facilities at the family medicine center much more accommodating than the crowded rooms at the center's former offices on Broad Street. The new building for the center opened officially for patients on June 9. Dr. William J. (Terry) Kane, program director for the Duke-Watts Family Medicine Program, said the new building will permit 20,000 patients to be seen at the center, twice the number possible in the old facilities. For more photos and related stories, see pages 3 and 4. (Photos by Parker Herring)