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NEWS

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*****Dr. Gladys Fashena the "Lone Ranger," to become professor emeritus at UT Southwestern.

DALLAS--Dr. Gladys Jeannette Fashena looks more like a lady you would like to visit with over a cup of tea and a plate of cookies rather than being a sort of Lone Ranger. However, the pediatrician, who will become professor emeritus at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas September 1, has become one of a kind.

Dr. Fashena, a graduate of Hunter College and Cornell Medical School, is the last remaining member of the original faculty at the health science center. The center, now a national leader, was founded in 1943 as Southwestern Medical College when Baylor Medical School moved to Houston.

The small group of 17 faculty members started classes in May in abandoned classrooms in Alex W. Spence Junior High School with no equipment and no materials. Even when the U.S. Army let the struggling school buy barracks for the fall term, the frontier spirit was necessary to keep going in quarters which seemed to be either sweltering or freezing. And a great deal of courage was needed to keep going under tremendous hardships.

"Night after night we stayed up making slides so the class would have something to look at the next day," says the professor, who taught pediatrics as well as pathology in the school's early days.

However, since it was wartime and her husband, Dr. Floyd Norman, also a pediatrician, was overseas, Fashena says that it didn't matter whether she worked day and night or not. That was a time of tremendous dedication and involvement on the part of all our citizens, and turning out of doctors was an important part of the war effort.

Fashena's schedule, however, seems to have always been full. After the war when her husband returned to his private practice in pediatrics in Dallas, she continued her teaching and clinical responsibilities at Southwestern and Children's Medical Center.

Time with her family has also been a top priority. The couple are parents of two children who have chosen quite different careers in medicine. Daughter Gail Ann Norman is a city veterinarian who lives in Dallas, while son Gordon Norman practices family medicine in upper New York State.

During her years at Southwestern, the pediatric cardiologist has been the recipient of many awards and honors. In January, 1976 she became the first woman to take over the leadership of the Dallas County Medical Society, a prestigious professional organization of 2,400-member physicians. She was the first woman ever to be elected to that office.

Fashena's years of service as a dedicated teacher of pediatric medicine also earned her the designation of Piper Professor of the Year by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation of San Antonio in 1974. This professorship honors university teachers for "outstanding and scholarly achievement." And in 1961 she and her husband, who was then regional health administrator for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, were jointly presented the Marchman Award by the Dallas Southern Clinical Society for their contributions to medicine through medical service to the community, medical education and medical research.

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Dr. Frederick Bonte, medical school dean, says these honors are richly deserved. "She's one of a small band of faculty who began a medical school against unreasonable odds and made it into one of the world's foremost centers of medical education. No one has contributed more to this remarkable achievement than Dr. Gladys Fashena."

Founder of the pediatric cardiology department at Children's Medical Center, the physician has also served as director of a congenital heart disease program based at the pediatric hospital. She is a member of both the CMC board of directors and the board of the Southwestern Medical Foundation.

She is the author of 46 scientific papers, one of which brought her the William Mecklenberg Polk Memorial Prize for original research.

Although a native of New York, Fashena says she's "glad we came to Texas to live." The pediatrician met her husband when they were both in pediatric residency programs there. They moved to Dallas shortly after their marriage in 1938. While Norman was busy setting up his practice, Fashena joined the faculty of Baylor Medical School. When the schism between the Southwestern Medical Foundation and Baylor Medical School occurred and the Houston move was imminent, she chose to stay in Dallas. At that point, the pediatrician's career history became inseparable from Southwestern's.

The pediatrician says she believes that she was lucky to get in on the ground floor of the development of what she calls "this marvelous institution.

"What happened here is not only an expansion but an explosion!"

The faculty of the Dallas institution has grown over the years from the original 17 to the 684 full-time members today. The first graduating class of 61 is numerical contrast to the 200 seniors of today. The campus is no longer either a few army barracks in the Oak Lawn area, lovingly called "the shacks" by old grads nor the first three permanent buildings on Harry Hines. Today The University of Texas Health Science Center is among the most modern teaching and research complexes in the country, in a beautiful campus setting. And research totaling almost \$26 million in basic science and patient care is being conducted at the center.

Fashena is proud to be a part of it all.

The pediatrician says that her years in medicine, both in training and in service to Southwestern and the health science center as one of its most outstanding faculty members, has been "the most exciting 50 years in the history of medicine."

In the early days there were no chemotherapeutic agents for cancer, no antibiotics and no anti-tumor drugs. Doctors were dependent on "transfusions, morphine and prayer, with such medicines as milk of magnesia thrown in." Now there are hundreds of agents to attack the armies of disease. "For example, when I was an intern, 80 to 90 percent of the children with most types of meningitis died. Today the salvage rate is over 90 percent."

The problems medicine faces, however, are endless.

And because of this, the well-known teacher/physician has no intention of completely retiring this fall. Although she goes on part-time status, Fashena will continue duties at the health science center and Children's as professor emeritus.

There is always a new challenge for the Lone Ranger.

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