



COLLECTIONS

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Women of Hahnemann University

Both Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania (WMC) and Hahnemann Medical College were pioneering institutions. Each was founded with courage and a strong sense of purpose. For WMC, its mission was to educate women as physicians, as opportunity previously denied. For Hahnemann, its mission was to introduce homeopathy, an innovative, therapeutic approach that challenged the excesses of traditional medicine. An interesting historical question which may be posed is why Hahnemann graduated only male students for nearly a century? The homeopathic profession, in general, was respectful of women, and Hahnemann did welcome diversity in other ways. At least six African-American men graduated from Hahnemann between 1884 and 1911, and Jewish fraternities were active at Hahnemann as early as the 1920s. In Philadelphia, and elsewhere, there were significant numbers of women homeopathic physicians, educated over the years in nearly all of the 22 homeopathic schools, two of which were founded exclusively for the education of women. By the 1870s, women were admitted to both the Philadelphia and state homeopathic societies, as well as the American Institute of Homeopathy, in each case several years in advance of their respective counterparts in traditional medicine.

The college was asked regularly to open its doors to women. While always refusing admission, the faculty made occasional small attempts at conciliation. In 1859, Sarah Brooks Pettingill, a Penn medical university graduate who wished to learn homeopathy, was allowed to "attend the lectures on Practice and Materia Medica, if she would sit like a 'veiled nun' behind a partition, screened from the students." A similar concession was made in 1865. In the 1870s a summer course was proposed for women, but never offered. In 1886, a formal request from the distinguished homeopathic Women's Medical Club of Philadelphia was carefully deliberated, but such a change seemed too great a risk at a time when requirement of the three-year curriculum threatened loss of male students, and financial support was needed for a new hospital. Ann Kirschmann, a Ph.D. candidate whose work centers on women homeopathic physicians, suggests that another reason

Hahnemann remained all male in the 19th century was the availability to women in Philadelphia of other avenues to a medical degree.

Despite their absence from the student body and faculty, women did play significant roles throughout the early years of the institution. A Board of Lady Managers ran the hospitals, and nurses cared for the patients. An 1869 "Great Fair", organized by a group called the Ladies' Homeopathic Hospital Fair Association, raised enough money to build, complete, and maintain a new hospital, and also to purchase the college property. Their successor, Hahnemann Hospital Association, has furnished buildings, entertained patients, established a library, student lounge, diet kitchen, gift shop, and Department of Social Work Services. It has raised money for scholarships, sophisticated equipment, a surgical observation tower, and even the new MedEvac helipad. The Association's magazine, *Hospital Tidings*, is still the principal record of 57 years of Hahnemann activity.

In the college proper, after 93 years of male domination, World War II and the shortage of male applicants finally opened the door for women: "in the spirit of the times, and in recognition of the wonderful work women are doing in Europe."

To learn about the women who were admitted to Hahnemann Medical College in 1941, and the history of women at Hahnemann since that time, please read Part II of this column in the Summer 1997 Issue of Collections.

At The Morani Gallery

The fall season opened in October with an exhibition of paintings and drawings by the late Marcella Ross, wife of Leonard Ross, Ph.D., provost of Allegheny University of the Health Sciences. An artist in her own right, Mrs. Ross clearly enjoyed experimenting with different media in a variety of styles, ranging from classic impressionism and pointillism in the manner of Seurat, to the more abstract styles of the modern masters. Her work was presented for sale through silent auction for the benefit of the Marcella Ross Scholarship Fund.

Our second show, "Small Works," opened December 1, 1996, and continued through January 20, 1997. Over 200 original small works of art were on display. No restriction was placed on the media, but the size of the works was limited to 14" x 18" or smaller. All were priced for sale at \$500 and under, with the proceeds to benefit the Mobile Mammography Program at Allegheny University Hospitals.

In addition, on Friday, February 7, 1997, the gallery hosted an Anniversary Party to commemorate the day The Morani Gallery officially opened its door eleven years ago.



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