



Elizabeth Blackwell, MD

Nation's first female physician

1847

As Jefferson celebrated its 21st commencement in 1847, British-born Elizabeth Blackwell (1821–1910) earned a medical degree in upstate NY at Geneva Medical College, becoming the first female physician in modern times. Thus began a double revolution in gender equality and women's health. While Geneva swiftly closed its doors to subsequent female applicants, Quakers in Philadelphia established the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1850.

1849

Sarah R. Adamson's application to JMC is rejected; she quoted Dean Robert Huston as writing, "it would be impossible in this country for a lady to mingle with five hundred young men ... in the same lecture room, without experiencing many annoyances." JMC forwards future applications by women to the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania. In 1851, Dr. Adamson becomes the first American-born woman to earn a medical degree.

1850



Female Medical College of Pennsylvania is founded, the first school to grant medical degrees to women. Renamed Woman's Medical College, it was also the last medical school to admit both genders in 1970, becoming Medical College of Pennsylvania. It has been the Drexel University College of Medicine since 2002.

1869

Residencies, internships and hospital appointments are often barred to women, who in turn respond by opening their own hospitals and private practices. Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania receives permission for its students to attend a clinic at Pennsylvania Hospital. Hundreds of male medical students from JMC and Penn protest the "mixed" class. The faculties of the male schools publish a joint "remonstrance" against female students in clinics. Newspapers and the community condemn the male students' ungentlemanly behavior. Society joins the challenge against male hegemony in medicine.

1891



Jefferson Medical College Hospital establishes a training program for women nurses. This is the fourth nursing school associated with a Pennsylvania medical college. 13 students enroll in first class.

1894

JMC Hospital's Board of Lady Managers is established. Its first project raises funds for a maternity clinic. The organization's name changes to The Women's Board in 1921.

1824
Jefferson Medical College is founded.

1847
First woman earns a medical degree in the U.S.

1891
Jefferson creates School of Nursing.

1910
Report urges consolidation of minority medical schools with larger institutions.

1950
First female professorship at JMC.

1961
JMC begins admitting female students.

1970
Percentage of female students at JMC surpasses national average.

1981
JMC appoints the nation's first female dean.

1998
JMC student gender ratio reaches 50/50.

TODAY
50 and forward...