



First Female Students Admitted to Jefferson Medical College

1961

On June 6, 1960, the Board of Trustees voted to admit women to Jefferson Medical College.

The first woman accepted was 21-year-old Nancy Szwec (above, fifth from left), who also won a scholarship. She and eight other women attended their first class at Jefferson on September 11, 1961. Szwec married in her junior year and took her husband's name, Czarnecki, moving toward the front of the alphabet to also become, in 1965, the first woman to accept a JMC diploma.

Graduation Day 1965. Left to right: Mary E. Knepp, Merle P. Gross, Amilu S. Martin, Margaret Libonati, Nancy S. Czarnecki, Carol A. Miller, Carloyn E. Parry and Joyce E. Price
Photos courtesy of Thomas Jefferson University Archives

1950s



At Faculty Executive Committee meetings, microbiology chair, William Goodner, PhD, regularly moves to admit women to Jefferson and is rejected until a unanimous vote passes on September 28, 1959.

1959

A federal self-assessment review is distributed to all U.S. medical schools. "The Surgeon General's Consultant Group on Medical Education," known as the Bane report, criticizes "unreasonable, restrictive" admission policies of some schools.

1965

Eight of the first female students graduate in June at the Academy of Music (the ninth student transferred).

1970



Less than a decade after first admitting women, Jefferson's percentage of female students exceeds the national average.

1974

A group of female students forms The 1961 Society to foster communication among female medical students at various stages of their careers and between doctors and nurses for the better treatment of patients. The group, open to women and men from all health professions, also hopes to increase the enrollment of Pennsylvania women at Jefferson.

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...
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