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United States Medicine, Women and Jefferson Medical College

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U.S. Medicine, Women & JMC

1824

JMC is founded; Philadelphia becomes the only city in world with two medical schools. (University of Pennsylvania's medical department was established in 1765.)

1826

JMC graduates its first class; the physicians are the first in the United States trained in clinical care practice.



< **1847**

Geneva Medical College in New York admits British-born Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States. When Blackwell graduates, Geneva ends the "experiment" and returns to admitting only men.

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." In the future, JMC forwards all

applications by women to the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania. In 1851, Dr. Adamson (Dolley) became the first American-born woman to earn a medical degree.

1850 >

The first school to grant women medical degrees, Female Medical College of Pennsylvania, is founded. Renamed Woman's Medical College 17 years later, it was the

last medical school to open enrollment to both genders, becoming Medical College of Pennsylvania with the change in 1970. It has been the Drexel University College of Medicine since 2002.



1869

Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania receives permission for its students to attend a clinic at Philadelphia's 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.

1870

"JMC Catalog" publishes a repudiation of "a mean and malicious falsehood" of an item in southern newspapers, saying, "Jefferson ... will make no distinction of sex or color, among applicants for admission."

1873

JMC Dean John Biddle, during his speech to students at the opening of the fall semester, says he recently denied a woman admission because of her "inferiority of a feeble and more delicate physical organization."

1891 >

JMC Hospital establishes the School of Nursing; 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.

1910

Flexner Report reviews all U.S. medical schools and gives JMC an A- rating. Many schools that accept women and minorities have closed, and Flexner advises surviving schools to merge.

1918

JMC faculty approves a resolution to open the school to women. Discussion between Jefferson and WMCP results in 1919 report proposing to share teachers and facilities in an affiliation "without the loss of identity." No further action takes place.

1946

An attempt to merge JMC with WMCP is rejected by WMCP Alumnae Association.

1950

The first non-medical graduate degree granted to a woman from Jefferson College of Graduate Studies, a master's in science in bacteriology, goes to Sonia Schorr.

1952

Jefferson Medical College Hospital welcomes its first female resident, Elizabeth M. Bogardus, MD, radiology, in July. She was a 1949 graduate of Long Island College of Medicine. She went on sick leave in February 1953 and never returned.

1953

JMC Hospital welcomes two women who will go on to finish a year of training: Vera (Easling) Dettweiler, MD, pediatrics, graduate of Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, 1951; and Evelyn D. Schmidt, MD, pediatrics, graduate of Duke University Medical School, 1951.

1959

Jefferson Medical College Hospital welcomes its first female intern, Ann M. Dimitroff, MD, a graduate of the Medical School of University of Louisville.

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, cites Jefferson as the last medical college to deny women entry.

1950s

Through the 1950s, during Faculty Executive Committee meetings, the chair of microbiology, William Goodner, MD, moves to admit women to JMC every year and is rejected annually until a

unanimous vote passes Sept. 28, 1959. The Board of Trustees approves the recommendation on May 23, 1960.

1961 v

Nine female JMC students arrive on campus in September. The faculty approves for two female "freshmen" to receive assistance in loans and scholarships.

1965

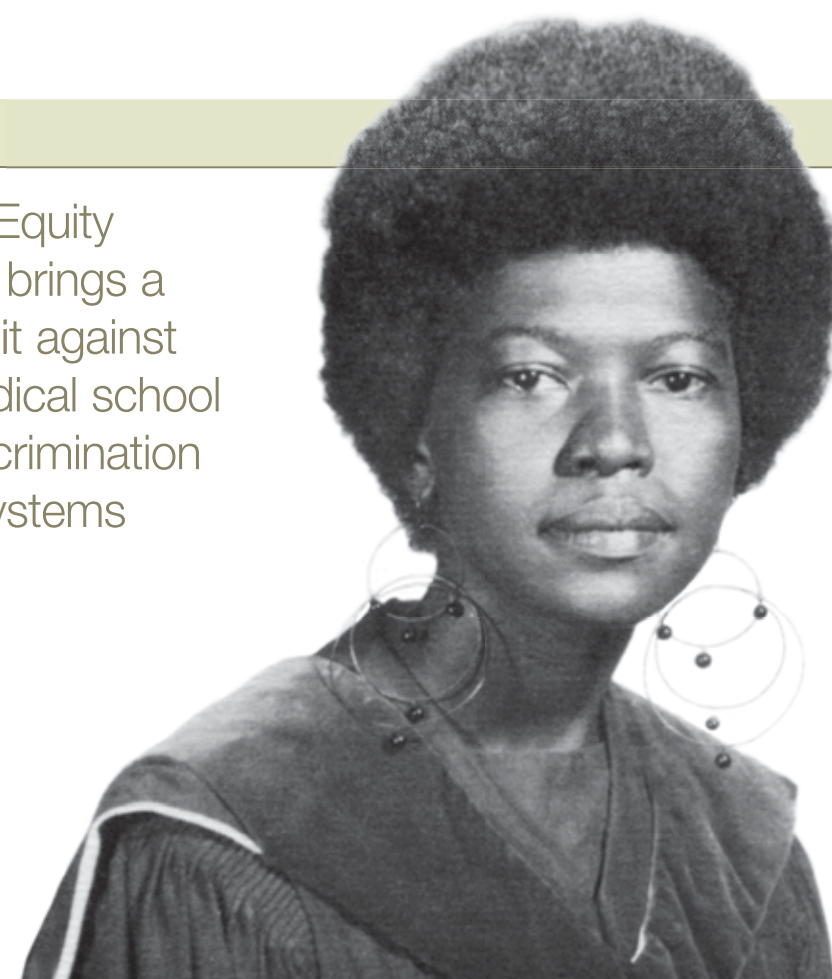
Eight of the first female students graduate in June at the Academy of Music (the ninth student transferred). Nancy Szwec Czarnecki becomes the first woman to receive a diploma at JMC.

1968

Martha Southard of the Radiation Therapy Department, Clinical Division, becomes the first woman to attain a full professorship.

1970

The Women's Equity Action League brings a class action suit against every U.S. medical school to address discrimination under quota systems most employ.



< **1971**

Cora LeEthel Christian becomes the first black woman to graduate from JMC.

1974

A group of female students forms The 1961 Society to foster communication among female med 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 hoped to increase the enrollment of Pennsylvania women at JMC.



1978

Gaylynn G.L. Li-Ma becomes the first Asian woman to graduate from JMC.

1980s

A rumor with no basis in fact begins to circulate that JMC was under a court order to accept female students in 1961. No order was ever issued.

1982 >

Leah M. Lowenstein becomes the first female dean of JMC and first of any U.S. medical school open to men and women; Dean Lowenstein served only 18 months before becoming ill with cancer and resigning.



1989

The JMC Alumni Association elects its first female president, Nancy Szwec Czarnecki, MD '65.

1998

Women comprise 50 percent of the entering class for the first time.

2002

Marion J. Siegman of physiology becomes JMC's first female chair in basic sciences.

2002

Vijay M. Rao of radiology becomes the first female chair in a clinical department.

Timeline assembled from various sources by TJU Archives, 2010. Photos courtesy of Thomas Jefferson University Archives.

Front Row: Joyce E. Price, RN, Amilu S. Martin, Nancy S. Swec, Carloyn E. Parry, Bette-Lee Jarvis
Second Row: Merle P. Gross, Carol A. Miller, Mary E. Knepp, Margaret Libonati