

OBSERVATIONS

FROM THE SIDELINES

By Kathryn Hall Bogle

Young, Black and looking for a career?

Careers for women might well include the one of being a pharmacist, suggests Geraldine McConnell Christian.

Mrs. Christian bases her recommendation on the 25 years plus of time, and the variety of experience, she had had in this profession. A good share of that time she has practiced here in Portland.

Mrs. Christian entered the white male dominated field of pharmacy soon after her graduation from the University of Colorado at Boulder. All of her earlier education had been in Denver, her birthplace. In childhood she had chosen to follow in the path blazed by two Black male pharmacists she admired. They encouraged the young woman to study toward this goal.

For a Black female it was not easy to find a job very readily after graduation. First there was the state examination; next was the required one-year apprenticeship in a drug store under supervision; then to find a willing employer. The latter was like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack.

It was in 1951 that the hopeful new pharmacist decided to search among federal listings of job openings, trusting that chances of her being hired would be better. They did prove better. There was an opening with the U.S. Army Chemical Corps at their Rocky Mountain Arsenal in Colorado.

At the arsenal, the Chemical Corps operated an infirmary and two busy First Aid stations to take care of ill or injured Army personnel. Though there was no declared war at the time, the Corps was engaged in manufacturing nerve gas and mustard gas. The pharmacy was a necessity.

Mrs. Christian stayed on the job four years. During this time she also married and became the mother of a small son. Increasingly, however, she felt it wise to remove herself from the proximity of the dangerous gasses. Fortunately her husband, Conrad McConnell, also a pharmacist, was working. Their situation allowed the wife and mother the convenience of giving her full time to these roles and she left the Chemical Corps.

The couple longed for a home "somewhere on the Pacific Coast", Mrs. Christian said. "We started out believing we could be happy anywhere from San Diego to Seattle. We wrote letters to Urban League offices asking questions important to us, like: 'Job openings in



Geraldine Christian: Behind the counter of the modern pharmacy. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

your city? What about housing? What is the racial climate? Answers were less than definitive for us. In the end we had to go to see for ourselves.

"We toured along the coast and fell in love with the Northwest. We settled on Portland. Within four days of our locating here my husband found a job with the Veterans' Administration. This was in 1957. He stayed with the VA for a while, but he was offered a bigger job with more responsibility (and money) as head of the pharmacy at St. Vincent Hospital. He stayed 16

years there. "Conrad's first job was vacant," Mrs. Christian continued. "I knew about it. I quickly applied for it -- and they hired me.

"The VA job was different for me. It was for an out-patient clinic in a downtown location. We served veterans in numbers. In those days a pharmacist did more than count out pills and capsules. We had to make up many of our prescriptions from doctors' individual orders.

"I made cough syrups by the half-gallon. I mixed powders for capsules. I made ointments by formula and we used a lot of bulk

medications to divide into smaller bottling or packaging. I liked it there and worked there for eleven years.

"There was a totally different experience for me at Crestview Convalescent hospital. This was a large place and I was in charge of the pharmacy and one helper for me. Here there were dosages for each patient for a 24-hour period. Each patient had to have detailed directions for each medication supplied by the nurses how to administer the medication in each case. I enjoyed all that.

"When I became a widowed person, I went back to the VA clinic situation and stayed for five years.

"Being a pharmacist has its credits, certainly. Thorough pharmacy is still male-dominated, there is equal pay for equal hours, and the same benefits accrue for men and women alike," Mrs. Christian pointed out.

"To prepare for a career in pharmacy, a student should have high school math, chemistry, physics and biology -- and good legs and feet!" she added with a laugh.

"I do not want to work a full time week anymore now, so I'm now working on a part-time contingent basis. Our pharmacy is located in a medical building that provides office space for a great many physicians.

"Pressures for me are lessened with this arrangement. I have time to attend the pharmacy seminars and other professional gatherings to keep up with new trends and regulations. Some are required by Oregon law to maintain licensed standing. Or, I can rest or travel."

Mrs. Christian is a pharmacist for the Northrup Medical Center Pharmacy in the Northrup Medical Building in Northwest Portland. Her son, a political reporter for the *Oregon Journal*, is Conrad (Pete) McConnell, Jr.

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From the Front Door

By Tom Boothe

From the Front Door, someone once asked me what was the most valuable elements on earth. After thinking for awhile I answered and said, Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding. He said what about Gold and Oil and other precious stones and materials. I said without Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding, how would you know how to recognize them to develop them to any degree of usability.

Most people today seem to emphasize the value of materials, and also the value of Political recognition and all too often these persons wind up making a fool of themselves, because they lack the wisdom to use the materials including money and political recognition wisely.

Most people today try to seek out money, and it evades most people; others find it and spend it foolishly and wind up right back where they started. Others seek Political recognition and it evades most people; others find it and they don't have the wisdom to manage it and it either destroys them immediately or they become slaves to the system, and they are destroyed in the end.

My point this week is, if one spent as much time seeking wisdom, knowledge and understanding as they spend in the search for money and material wealth, they would be richer by a hundred fold.

It isn't how much you have, as much as it is how well you manage what you have; and how well you are able to manage what you have it directly related to how much wisdom, knowledge and understanding you have.

You can have anything you know how to get. You can do anything you know how to do. But, you cannot have those things you do not know how to get. You cannot do things you do not know how to do. But, you can learn if you have a positive attitude. Most people use less than ten percent of their mental capabilities. Let's go after the ninety percent that is still out there.

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Turner receives BA award

Martin Turner was recently awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award granted to the member of the Seattle Chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants who has excelled within the profession.

A native of Portland, Turner graduated from Jefferson High School and earned a Bachelor's

degree in Business Administration from the University of Portland. He received a Master of Business Administration in Taxation from the University of Southern California.

Upon graduation he was employed by the Internal Revenue Service as revenue agent. Through dedication and professional growth Martin was recently promoted to a level of GS-14 in the Appeals Department. He has recently been ac-

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cepted to the management career program of Internal Revenue Service.

Martin is a member of the AIC-PA, California and Washington State Society of Certified Public Accountants.

He is married to Bonita Turner, a manager with IBM and has two daughters, Kristine and Michelle. In his leisure time he enjoys playing tennis and reading. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Jordan of Portland.

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