

# HEALTH

The Portland Observer

## More On The Ancient African Practitioners Of Medicine

BY PROFESSOR MCKINLEY BURT

Last week, 2/19/94, I began recounting many of the wonderful contributions to the field of medicine by Africans and African Americans--beginning with some of our ancestors in Ethiopia and Pharonic Egypt. Be sure to get that copy of the Portland Observer for valuable citations of books and sources, and particularly for the Greek copy cats and wannabes; well documented as usual.

Speaking further to that, let me refer you to an excellent book by a noted British author/physician, Atkinson, who wrote an excellent and extremely unreadable history of medicine, still in print, "Magic, Myth and Medicine." It begins with the seminal African contributions of Egypt and contiguous domains, then the Hebrews, followed on by the Greek late-comers ("notorious thieves"), then the Romans and so forth.

Seven thousand years ago, Imhotep, Vizer to black King Zoser--whose full-lipped, thick-nosed likeness is preserved in the British Royal Museum--became chief physicians of the land and so highly honored for his abilities he was adjudged divine. From this very first dynasty on, thousands of years before the Greek, Hippocrates was born, Africans set the standards, disciplines and ethics for the world's medical profession.

We have it further from Atkinson's book; "From the first dynasty onward (4000 B.C.), Egypt had a system of medicine more rational than the world was again top see for over 3000 years. Egyptian physicians, famous as teachers, visited and taught in Arabia (Saudia Arabia and Yemen), Persia (Iraq, Iran and Kuwait), and in Greece. Hippocrates, grandfather of the great physician by that name, was the pupil of Egyptian. Medical knowledge in Greece, fused with Egyptian teaching, was handed down from father to son as a family heritage. In this

way Egyptian medicine became the groundwork for Greek medicine as given to us by Hippocrates."

My, My! It occurs that had some of the detractors of the school system's "multicultural Baseline Essays" gone to good schools like Dr. Atkinson's (Oxford, University of Edinburgh), they would not have found so much to quarrel with when shocked by documented recitations of minority contributions. I'm happy to report that despite the fact that racists (or those in fear of racists) rejected my contributions to the process--including my specialty, "Black Inventors"--I've survived and now have excellent support from industry for both research and manuscript preparation. I'll have those "African technology" volumes out yet.

I've stopped to mention this because of the number of inquiries from would-be African American contributors to our history who feel that they have been blocked or shut out of the process--even by other blacks to whom they refer to as "the clique". I'm aware of what they are talking about but it is something I will have to address in a later article. Let it suffice, now, to suggest expanding your contacts and resources, moving right around the envious and jealous as I did.

As mentioned the other week, I've rejoined the Association of Oregon Industries, making presentations to executive determined to further an ailing education process and recognizing that developing a strong role model and self-image process is the key--beginning with history. Already, I've been put out eh "Information Highway" International Network with almost instantaneous access to universities, libraries, museums, archives and other resources. Also, I have "Fax Correspondents", now, in 11 foreign countries with whom I exchange critical historical information.

But, back to the ancient African men and women of medicine. In the Egyptian pantheon, a symbol for the "eye of Horus" became a popular charm to protect eyes and to promote health. The sign which precedes our medical prescriptions was derived from it. It passed through many stages and eventually took on the appearance of our capital "R"; bearing an inclined dash at its base. (The "eye of Horus" also appears on the reverse side of a dollar bill--above the pyramid in the great seal of the U.S.)

Then, we can well understand Atkinson's statement that his research shows that Hippocrates showed no recognition of the early emblem of the Greek healing art the Caduceus; "this healing wand with the entwined serpents, no doubt, had its origin long before the birth of Hippocrates". We soon find that this internationally accepted and honored symbol of the highest profession of mankind originated in prediagnostic Egypt.

In Lamy's book, "Egyptian Mysteries", we are reminded that during the prediagnostic period the Spring Equinox was in the sign of Gemini, the twins, and at the same time there was a dual monarchy in Egypt. Each part had a double capital, the North and the South; the notorious "two land" that were finally unified. "This theme of duality, also prominent in a number of sculpted tablets dating from that period, is further confirmed by the prototype of 'Hermes Staff', the Caduceus with its twin serpents."

Well, there we have a lot of backup to Herodotus, the "further" of history, and to Homer, the Greek poet and narrator (Odyssey, 4,229-332). and of course, we have the "Ebers" and other papyri with their prescriptions sounding quite modern. See my "Perspectives" column in this paper for important African American contributors to the medical profession this century.

## "Kids Making Miracles" Receives Large Donation

First Interstate Bank of Oregon is helping secure the continued growth of a statewide school volunteer program to raise funds and friends for Doernbecher Children's Hospital in Portland. First Interstate has donated \$25,000 for the second consecutive year to the "Kids Making Miracles" campaign to be used to help recruit and train young volunteers.

"Kids Making Miracles" helps student volunteers put together fundraising events in their communities. So far, more than 190 schools from Oregon and southwest Washington have expressed interest in the 1994 program. Last year, students from 66 elementary, middle and

high schools raised \$125,000 for Doernbecher involving over 47,000 students. On May 6th & 7th, all schools will wrap up their campaigns by taking part in eh Doernbecher Torch Relay. Students will run from Tillamook High School, which raised the most money last year, to the Doernbecher Eternal Flame on the Oregon Health Sciences University Campus.

More than 25,000 children are treated at Doernbecher each year for serious illnesses such as cancer, kidney disease and genetic disorders.

The hospital provides treatment for virtually all children regardless of the family's ability to pay, and last year provided millions of dollars in uncompensated care. At the same time, the hospital receives only six percent of its budget from the state.

## Breaking The Sickle Cycle

The National Association for Sickle Cell Disease (NASCD) and its 74 member organizations in calling on you to assist us in launching a public information campaign during the month of September which is annually recognized as National Sickle Cell Month. U.S. Congressman Julian Dixon serves as Honorary Chairman for the month long appeal while noted actor Robert Guillaume is in his second year as our National Spokesman.

This year's campaign is especially critical because Sickle Cell Disease, an inherited blood disorder that affects over 2.5 million Americans, has been put on the back burner as a public health policy issue. NASCD will be making a concerted effort to rally public, corporate and legislative support to join us in our now 22 year mission to "Break The Sickle Cycle And Find A Cure For Sickle Cell Disease."

The enclosures will give you historical data on NASCD, the disease we are fighting and information on our scheduled hearing during the annual Congressional Black Caucus Convention in September where we will take our fight for the rights of Sickle Cell Disease victims to the Hill and appeal for equity.

I am also including media related materials to be disseminated by our company as well as a list of available spokespersons. Thank you in advance for aiding NASCD in bringing



1993-94 National Sickle Cell Poster Child-9 year old Anthony Oliver Miller has been selected as the National Association For Sickle, Cell Disease, Inc. Poster Child and Goodwill Ambassador. He will serve from October 1 to September 30, 1994.

assistance to those who through their courage that spurs us on the their accident of birth must courageously "Break The Sickle Cycle and Find A Cure For Sickle Cell Disease." seek to live a meaningful life. It is

## Panel To Address Immigrant Issues

A special workshop titled "The Immigration Experience: Issues for Mental Health Workers" is being offered for mental health professionals, social workers, administrators, students and others.

Sponsored by the Pacific University Psychological Service Center, the Pacific University Division of Continuing Education, and the Multnomah County Oregon Department of Social Services--Office of Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, the panel discussion workshop will be held Tuesday, March 15 from 2:10 to 4:50pm. Location will be the Portland Building, 1120 SW 5th Avenue in downtown Portland.

This panel presentation will provide an overview of the immigration experience to America and the more culture-specific stressors and mental health issues associated with Hispanic,

Russian Pentecostal, and Southeast Asian immigrants. Workshop participants will learn about eh problems that are faced by immigrant to America, how the "Refugee Syndrome" impacts Southeast Asian families in terms of mental health issues, the impact of Hispanic cultural practices and beliefs on adjusting to the dominant Anglo culture.

Panel members facilitating the workshop will be Karen Hedden, M.S., P.M.H.N.P.; Susana Silva-Strommer, M.S.W. and Thuy Vanderlinde, M.S.W., L.C.S.W. Karen Hedden is a Psychiatric, Mental Health Nurse practitioner working with Multnomah County providing assistance for various populations. She practices part-time with the Ministrh-Meier Clinic in Portland. Susana Silva-Strommer is a managed care coordinator for the Multnomah County Office of Child and Adolescent Mental-Partners

Project. In addition to providing crisis intervention, assessments, and family therapy for children with severe emotional problems and their families, she consults and provides training for schools and teachers on mental health issues concerning immigration and students with limited English. A part-time practitioner providing training for mental health providers, Thuy Vanderlinde holds extensive experience working with refugee populations, particularly persons from Southeast Asia. She consults with local community-based agencies serving Southeast Asian clients, conducts assessments for Portland Public Schools, and is a consultant for the Multnomah County Juvenile Justice system.

For pre-registration and more information contact the Pacific University Psychological Service Center at 220-0390.

# 25¢ Produce Sale!

Prices effective February 23 through March 1, 1994 at Safeway.



## Large Seedless Navel Oranges

# 25¢ Lb

- Extra Large Baking Potatoes.....25¢ lb
- Texas Ruby Grapefruit.....Medium.....25¢ ea
- Crisp Green Cabbage.....25¢ lb
- Fresh, Juicy Sunkist Lemons.....2 for 25¢
- Sweet Crisp Carrots.....Clip topped.....25¢ lb
- Fresh Green Onions.....25¢ bu
- Crisp Red Radishes.....25¢ bu
- California Kiwifruit.....25¢ ea
- Fresh Green Bell Peppers.....25¢ ea

## Cancer Pain Target Of New Federally-Backed Guidelines

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala will announce new guidelines for reducing pain cancer patients on Wednesday, March 2. The undertreatment of cancer-related pain is a national problem affecting millions of patients and their families.

The Agency for Health Care Policy and Research-sponsored guidelines were developed by a private-sector panel of leading pain experts and cancer patients.

When: 11:30am, Wednesday, March 2, 1994

Where: Hubert H. Humphrey Bldg. Auditorium U.S. Dept. Of Health and Human Services 200 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20201  
Contact: AHCPH Public Affairs Branch 301/594-1364  
Ext. 173 Bob Isquith  
Ext. 169 Bob Griffin  
Ext. 148 Paula Zeller (9-1 only)

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