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# THE SPHINX

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY, INC.

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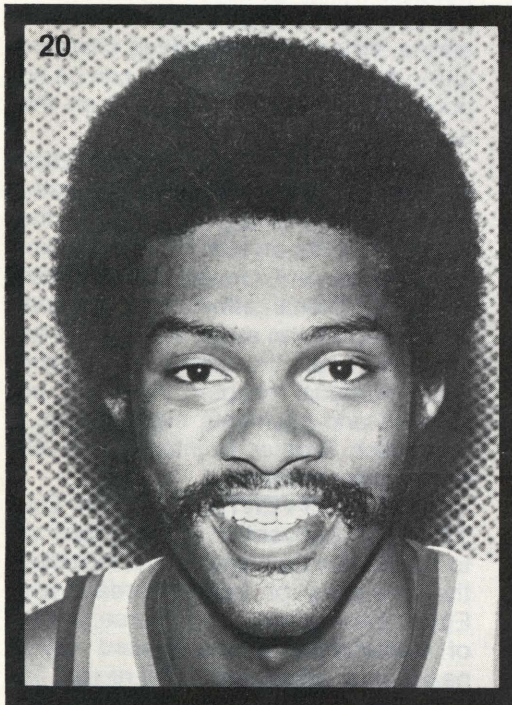
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**PHOTO CREDITS:** Cover photo by Brother Berve Power, Power Studios, Chicago, Illinois. Page Seven: Top Right, Bottom Right, and Left by Brother Berve Power.

**ABOUT THE COVER:** Brothers Walter E. Tyson, William Woods, David Shipley, and Gregory Bragg after their selection for *Distinguished Collegians*.



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# FOCUS

Like countless others, **Brother LEONIDAS H. BERRY** encountered prejudice and discrimination in his career, such as being denied access to hospital research laboratories — forcing him to set up his own. And like so many others whose talents were too rich to be contained, he has done his share of “ice-breaking.” He was the first Black doctor on staff at Chicago’s famed Michael Reese Hospital; the first Black attending physician at Cook County Hospital; the first Black certified gastroenterologist and endoscopist in the country — and the list continues. Significantly, however, the most notable of Dr. Berry’s achievements lie solely within his chosen profession — the practice of medicine. In this area, Brother Berry’s contributions have transcended the question of race.

Dr. Berry is an internationally recognized authority on internal medicine and digestive diseases and is a world renowned expert on endoscopy — the examination, with a special instrument, of various parts of the digestive tract. His book, *Gastrointestinal Pan-Endoscopy*, received praise as a “colossal work” in the field and is the definitive work for consultation by both medical students and experienced physicians. The 632-page, 39-chapter work contains articles by endoscopists from nine countries on four continents and includes more than 120 color photographs of parts of the digestive system in both healthy and diseased states. Dr. Berry, senior editor and author of the text, even took some of the photographs for the publication during the three and one-half years required to prepare it.

Born in North Carolina and reared in and around Norfolk, Virginia, Brother Berry received his undergraduate training at Wilberforce University — where he was initiated into Alpha Phi Alpha in 1921. Receiving his medical degree from the University of Chicago Medical School, Dr. Berry did his internship at Freedmen’s Hospital in Washington, D. C. He returned to Chicago to take part in an affiliation between Provident Hospital and his alma mater which would allow him to be trained in internal medicine and gastroenterology — with the un-



Dr. Berry examines patient’s stomach at Cook County Hospital, Chicago.

derstanding that after training he would go to all-Black Provident and teach. Brother Berry used his three-year training period to get another degree — an M.S. in pathology. Skeptical of the theory that Blacks were peculiarly susceptible to many diseases simply because of their race, Dr. Berry conducted research during his training — culminating in his master’s thesis on “Tuberculosis and Race.” While he did find a higher incidence of tuberculosis among Blacks, Berry documented that this was due to the adverse economic and social conditions under which most Blacks lived.

Certified as a <sup>internist</sup> gastroenterologist and endoscopist in 1934<sup>6</sup> Brother Berry was on the staff of Provident Hospital when he came into contact with Dr. Rudolph Schindler, who invented the gastroscope — an instrument to look into stomachs. Subsequently, Dr. Berry developed the Berry Gastrobiopsy scope, used to suction off a piece of tissue from inside the body; became the first Black to present a paper to a convention of the American Medical Association; developed the Gastroscopy Clinic at Provident Hospital; and trained hundreds of physicians in endoscopy. Current controversies surrounding unnecessary surgery serve to highlight the clinical import of Dr. Berry’s expertise in and refinement of the field of gastroenterology. The new techniques used by Dr. Berry have reduced the number of exploratory surgical operations necessary for proper diagnosis and Brother Berry envisions the day when patients will walk into a doctor’s office for a regular endoscopy exam, much as

regular checkups are conducted today.

It would take an entire book to adequately chronicle the distinguished career of Brother Berry, a past president of the National Medical Association. He has lectured in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe in his field; developed the Berry Plan, coupling psychological and physical assistance for drug addicts; conducted cancer research; organized the Flying Black Medics, allowing medical personnel to travel and provide free health care to impoverished areas of Southern Illinois; and, again, the list continues.

Dr. Berry has contributed years of volunteer service in the community. In 1977, he retired after thirty years as Medical Director for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, at which time he was named director emeritus. Within the Fraternity, he served as Secretary of Xi Chapter; President of Theta; Treasurer of Xi Lambda; and was an early member of the Theta-Xi Lambda Foundation which secured the present house containing the Fraternity’s national headquarters.

The recipient of countless awards and citations, Life Member Berry was the recent recipient of the 1978 Alumni Achievement Award from the University of Chicago. In 1966, he was honored by that institution for Public Service.

Given the frightful shortage of Blacks entering the medical professions because of insufficient motivation, goal models, and the problem of racial discrimination, young minority youth would be well advised to choose as a role model Dr. Leonidas H. Berry — an Alpha Man!