

Remarks by Sheldon S. Waldstein, M.D.

at Opening Reception of Exhibit

"Dr. Leonidas Berry: Medical Pioneer"

DuSable Museum of African American History

Sunday, January 11, 1987

5:00 P.M.

Prof of Med
clin. Div.
EN DOCRINOLOGY
Northwestern
University
Executive Director
Cook County GRADUATE
OF MEDICINE -

Dr. Berry, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I should like to summarize briefly for you Dr. Barry's career, in order to put in perspective the importance of this exhibition which is being dedicated today.

Dr. Berry was trained in gastroenterology, (a branch of Internal Medicine devoted to diseases of the stomach and intestinal tract) at the University of Chicago and affiliated hospitals from 1930 to 1933, a time when subspecialization was new and uncommon. Certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the subspecialty Board of Gastroenterology, he has been throughout his career a dedicated and compassionate physician to his patients. But beyond that he has always been committed to the advancement of clinical practice and scientific knowledge, as shown by his many original research studies, publications, and citations in the medical literature, and by membership in learned Gastroenterology Societies.

In 1937, he trained with Rudolph Schindler, one of the pioneers in visualizing gastrointestinal tract by endoscopy, that is the insertion of a lighted tube through which to see the inside of hollow organs. Dr. Berry was the first to perform this technique in many hospitals around the country, including Provident Hospital here in Chicago. He soon became a leader in the field nationwide. He first published a medical article about the technique in 1939. By 1946, he could report his experience in

1400 such examinations to the Chicago Society of Internal Medicine and by 1956, in over 3000 examinations to the American Gastrosocopy Society. In 1974, he wrote and edited a textbook on Gastrointestinal Endoscopy which has become a standard. He was one of the first to modify the gastroscope so that tissue samples (biopsies) can be taken -- the Berry gastroscope.

Dr. Berry began his affiliation with the Cook County Graduate School of Medicine in 1946. The Graduate School was founded in 1932 to provide educational courses to practicing physicians. We all appreciate how rapidly medicine has advanced in this century, particularly since the end of World War II. How do physicians keep abreast of these advances? Partly by reading, partly by medical meetings, but also by taking courses which are 20 to 40 or more hours long where new knowledge and up to date practice standards are taught by experts.

From 1946 through the '60's, Dr. Berry taught the technique of gastroscopy to hundreds, even thousands of physicians, who were then able to use the method in their own practice. His course become known nationally and even internationally. Although he himself no longer need endure the rigors of teaching such a course, it continues to be taught by his younger colleagues and remains one of the premier courses of its type in the country. Because of his outstanding teaching and devotion to the advancement of medicine through continuing medical education, he was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Graduate School in 1967. He has served faithfully since, his sage counsel always being welcomed by his fellow trustees.

I want to add a personal note of appreciation for Lee's friendship and collegiality. I first met him when I was an intern at County Hospital in 1947 and he was one of the young attendings using new methods in practice.

Imagine putting lighted rubber tubes in patients to see what was going on in the stomach! Throughout my training, I could always ask him for, and get solid advice on problem patients. Later, when I had administrative responsibility at the Hospital and then at the Graduate School, I could always count on Lee to accept teaching assignments willingly and to carry them out enthusiastically and with consummate skill.

So we of the Cook County Graduate School of Medicine are honored and happy to participate in the opening of the exhibit devoted to the life-long work of one of the truly great pioneers in Chicago medicine -- Dr. Leonidas Berry.