



NEWSLETTER

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Officers, Trustees,
Past Presidents, Presidents
of Component Societies of
the National Medical Association

Dear Colleagues:

It has been my plan to report to you briefly from time to time on the activities of the administration of your National Organization as far as the Office of the President is concerned. Since some of you did not attend the 70th Convention in Cincinnati, I wish to report that this Convention was one of the largest in attendance in the Organization's history. It was one of the best structured in terms of its scientific programs and its cultural and extra-curricular activities. More than thirty-five members of the faculty of the University of Cincinnati and its affiliates participated. Close color TV was used for medical and surgical clinic from local hospitals for the first time in Cincinnati's history, with members of our Association as senior participants. Among outstanding guests participants who will undoubtedly be written up in the Journal were: Doctors Albert Sabin, Cincinnati; Charles W. Mayo of the Mayo Clinic; Henry N. Harkins, University of Washington; Otis O. Benson, Jr., Major General, USAF, Ret., San Antonio, Texas, Father of Space Medicine; Clifford C. Grulee, Jr., Dean, University of Cincinnati and others.

There were unique features at the Cincinnati Convention. Four honorary memberships in the National Organization were given as follows: Dr. Henry D. West, President of Meharry Medical College; Dr. Charles W. Mayo; Dr. Walter M. Booker, Professor and Head, Department of Pharmacology, Howard University, and Dr. Henry N. Harkins, Professor and Chairman, Department of Surgery, University of Washington, Seattle.

Three medical schools held alumni reunion meetings, namely, Meharry Medical College, Howard University College of Medicine, and the University of Chicago Medical School. The latter holding a reunion at an NMA Convention for the first time, featured a luncheon with twenty-one alumni, ten wives and fifteen other guests in attendance. Among the distinguished alumni and classmates of your President were Major General O. O. Benson, Jr., Drs. Henry Harkins, William S. Hoffman, Chicago and Albert "Lost Boundaries" Johnston, Keene, New Hampshire. Other University of Chicago alumni included Dr. Edwin F. Hirsch, National President of the University of Chicago Alumni Association and Professor Riley F. Thomas of Howard University.

Eighty percent of your President's recommendations were approved by the House of Delegates during its busy but effective sessions with Dr. Emory L. Rann of Charlotte, North Carolina, very capably presiding as Speaker.

The President's approved program was begun with the close of the August Convention as far as was possible. This apparently was not soon enough as indicated by three or four embarrassing experiences. One of your President's approved recommendations was the appointment of his Advisory Committee on Health Legislation consisting of the President-Elect, Dr. John Holloman of New York; Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. W. T. Armstrong, North Carolina; Speaker of the House, Dr. E. L. Rann, North Carolina; Dr. Edward Mazique, D. C.; Dr. A. C. Terrance, Louisiana and Dr. Earl Belle Smith, Pennsylvania. Upon writing the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to offer continued cooperation of the Association and to request appointment for participation in the implementation of the new health legislation, I received a letter in reply, a copy of which is enclosed. Additional "appointments" were made through conferences with other Governmental agencies for as far away from August 10th as September 13. In each instance, I have found out about these "official" acts only in the exercise of the duties and prerogatives of the Office of President with obvious embarrassment to governmental officials, the National Medical Association and its President. I will undoubtedly live with this situation, recognizing that it is par for the course. However, to refrain from informing you would be to fail to hold up the stature of the high office of President to which your representatives elected me. I am, however, concerned that the day may soon come when men of stature and self esteem may not wish to stand for president if such practices as described continue.

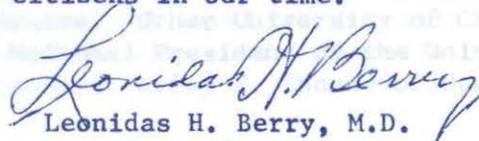
Another of your President's approved recommendations was the re-activation of the Liaison Committee activities with the American Medical Association. This had been held in abeyance during the previous two administrations and the activist approach given a trial. AMA officials, in fact, approached me as President-Elect in May, 1965, regarding reactivation of liaison activities. I promptly referred them to the President indicating that I would not become president until August 10, 1965. My immediate predecessor acknowledged this in his report to the House of Delegates, Cincinnati.

Desiring to explore all possibilities and to take advantage of the leverage of recent federal legislation as soon as possible, your President promoted and effectuated a liaison meeting with the AMA at their headquarters in Chicago on September 27, 1965. In attendance were all members of the NMA Liaison Committee appointed by your President and approved by the House of Delegates, namely, Drs. W. T. Armstrong, Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Emory L. Rann, Speaker of the House; John L. Holloman, President-Elect; John A. Kenney, Past President; Leonidas H. Berry, President, and Attorney John Morris, Chicago, acting for Attorney Coleman, official NMA Legal Advisor, Philadelphia. The AMA Liaison Committee in attendance consisted of President James Z. Appel, Pennsylvania;

President-Elect Charles Hudson, Cleveland; Dr. Percy Hopkins, Chicago, Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Executive Vice-President, Dr. Blasingame; Administrative Assistant, Mr. Lee Brown, and an AMA attorney. The meeting was outspoken and frank, but friendly. The problem of basic medical memberships in the American Medical Association and its local component societies, the equitable implementation of recent health legislation and problems of hospital discrimination and patient discrimination were discussed during the six hour conference. The AMA group agreed to recommend to their Board of Trustees and House of Delegates certain definite steps growing out of the recommendations of the NMA group. These are to be reported within two months and the next liaison conference will be contingent upon official concurrence of the AMA governing bodies. The full report of this meeting as well as subsequent meetings will be sent to the editor of the Journal.

Your President and two members of his Advisory Committee on Legislation, namely, Past President Edward Mazique, D. C. and President-Elect, John L. Holloman of New York, conferred with Under-Secretary of HEW, Wilbur Cohen, the Assistant Secretary, Mr. James M. Quigley and the newly appointed Surgeon General of the U. S. Public Health Service, Dr. William Stewart, on general problems of the implementation of the Medical Care Law, particularly, as they may affect members of the NMA and their patients. Secretary Cohen accepted our suggestion that brochures be sent to all NMA members regarding social security for doctors and other information on the Medical Care Law.

Your President's recommendation of a committee on membership and orientation to solicit white as well as non-white members for the NMA was approved by our House of Delegates. This Committee was appointed with Dr. Garnett T. Ice of Detroit, Chairman. Others are Drs. Helen O. Dickens, Pennsylvania; David French, D. C.; Claude Organ, Nebraska; Robert Smith, Mississippi; Sylvester Smith, Indiana; Jeanne Spurlock, Illinois; Aaron Wells, New York and A. A. Williams, California. On Sunday, October 17, a "kick-off" membership and orientation luncheon was held at the Shoreland Hotel, Chicago at the time of the meeting of the National Governing Board of the Medical Committee for Human Rights and the opening of the Annual Convention of the American Public Health Association. Although we have been unable to get funds for this Committee, most of them were present at their own expense. Fifty-five persons attended the luncheon, including eight Chicago medical and surgical residents who were guests. Several candidates submitted applications with checks for dues on the spot. These applications and all others will be properly processed according to the Constitution. There are at present, to my knowledge, at least fifty applications from white doctors being processed, mostly faculty members from such schools as Yale, Columbia, University of Illinois, University of California, Tufts, and Cornell. These doctors are interested because of the liberal and progressive philosophy of NMA members in medical care through the years and because these applicants wish to be a part of the forward thrust of disadvantaged American citizens in our time.


Leonidas H. Berry, M.D.
President