

Jones, E.
Letter Read
NMM

January 7, 1966

Edith I. Jones, M.D.
2601 Prospect Street
Houston, Texas

Dear Doctor Jones:

I have just returned a few days before Christmas from a fabulous 22,000 miles to East and West Africa. I was the guest of the State Department and of the Pan American Airways.

I visited nine hospitals including five teaching hospitals and medical schools in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Liberia and Senegal, the details of which I would enjoy telling you later. I saw many African diseases, took pictures of the same, gave lecture-demonstrations in gastroscopy, made special medical rounds, and had conferences with Ministers of Health in these countries and with doctors toward seeing whether or not cooperative relationships could be established between our society (NMA) and societies and facilities in those areas, to be sure such relationships already exist here and there from different points of view - but there is still room for an association like ours so these people seem to feel. This is certainly my point of view also.

Specifically, I am writing at this time to indicate that I am to attend the Conference on Oral Cancer to be held at the America Hotel on January 22 and 23 (Saturday and Sunday). Because of my tremendously packed schedule, I have not had time to write you before. I received this invitation shortly before leaving for Africa on the 25th of November. Coming to Houston certainly makes me wish that I could meet with members of the local branch of the National Medical Association. While the time is short, if you could get together a representative group I would be happy to make an official visit to meet the men on Saturday night, the 22nd, or Sunday night, the 23rd. I am giving you this official information and asking you to pass it on to the officers of the local society.

I believe that two kinds of discussions would be appropo -- something of a report on proposals developed out of discussions with Ministers of Health in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and Liberia as to how doctors in our society might cooperate and vice versa with doctors, medical societies, and facilities in East and West Africa. I would tell them something of interest in terms of the

diseases that I saw and I might even bring along some slides and movies to show them something about my involvement in seeing animals and so on which was a part of the VIP courtesies of the Pan American Airways. Other people on part of the trip — that is, the East African portion — were travel editors of big American daily newspapers, because the flight was primarily an inaugural flight setting up for the first time Pan American services to East Africa. I regret very much that we only have a little more than two weeks, but I should be extremely grateful to you if you could set up a meeting in which you could get members of the local society to attend to hear a report from your national president.

Also, as I hope you may have learned, I have been appointed to the twelve-man National Advisory Council to the National Program of Heart Disease, Cancer, and Stroke, and we have had the first meeting which was on December 21 and 22. A fellow citizen of yours, Dr. Michael DeBakey, is a member of this council as you may know. We were all quite involved for two whole days setting up plans for implementation of this tremendous program. We as Negro physicians and we as members of the NMA have a considerable stake in this whole matter -- first of all to assure that there are good human relations and to see that the problems of discrimination against patients and doctors is taken care of. I have some plans in this area and they might want to hear about this. There have been about ten members of our society, whom I have appointed around the country, who have attended various committees for the implementation of this particular program and of medicare. The men might want to hear about this. Certainly, somebody should keep them abreast in these areas.

If all of this can be done, please write me or call me collect and I will be very glad to come. The time is a little short and the two days only makes my wife feel that she should not come this time. If we had a longer period, I had originally thought in terms of getting the auxiliary and the doctors together under which circumstances I would insist that she come. I think, however, it is too short for this. That is all for now.

Very truly yours,

Leonidas H. Berry, M.D.

LHB/ld