

FERGUSON-DROSTE-FERGUSON

clinic

72 Sheldon Avenue

S.E.

Grand Rapids 2, Michigan

November 10, 1958

Leonidas H. Berry, M.D.  
412 East Forty Seventh Street  
Chicago 15, Illinois

Dear Dr. Berry:

I appreciate your sending me a copy of the letter addressed to Dr. Perkel. It has been brought before the Board, and fully discussed. You will recall, of course, that Dr. Nix and I talked to you about the situation while we were in Washington. At the time, I did not realize exactly the full impact of the situation as it is. Now, I believe I understand it a little better. I am very sorry that you did not choose to attend the meeting, because we had a very excellent and well attended program. There were 2-3 colored doctors, and a couple of colored interns, who attended all the sessions. The only hitch is this, that the hotel would not serve them food; neither would they give them lodging. I was told that, had you been present, you would have been a house guest of the President of the Dillard University.

This matter of religion, creed, color, and intregation is a little larger than any of us even though, in our small way, we do participate. Obviously, we cannot make the final decisions. Personally, I would not want to boycott New Orleans as a meeting place, because it is an excellent one. These other extra-medical problems we have to work out as best we possibly can. I find that all of the men in the organization in New Orleans are staff members at Turo and the colored hospital and, as you know, Nix, and Ochs, and Irving Levin carry on teaching courses for the Staff, Residents, and Interns. I feel sure that, with a patient attitude, these differences of opinion will eventually fade out. It may not be in your generation or mine, but if you will think back a few years, you must realize that your race has come a long ways not only through your own efforts but through those of your white friends, in spite of the fact that their white friends objected. Many years ago, when I was Chairman of the St. Mary's Board for 19 years excepting for 2 years when I was Staff Chief, we had a couple of colored doctors on our Staff who were fine gentlemen. One was a Dermatologist, and the other a general practitioner. The general practitioner never got a chance to do surgery on his own. Now we have 4-5 colored physicians in our city, all fine gentlemen, and all scheduling their own surgery according to their several abilities. I think we have made some gains, and I don't think anything is to be gained by being vindictive, and I don't think the American College of Gastroenterology could accomplish very much by boycotting any of the Southern States. As far as I am concerned, it is the wrong way to go about it. I think that one gains favor by being understanding and cooperative and - above all - humble even though it may take 2-3 generations to accomplish the ultimate end. There

Continuing letter to Leonidas H. Berry, M.D.

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are quite a few of us who understand your position thoroughly, and can agree with you on all points excepting the method of solution. Keep in mind that I am not stating the position of the Board of Trustees, by this letter, but only my own thoughts in the matter. We have these problems in Grand Rapids, and you certainly have encountered them in Chicago. In your heart, I am pretty sure, you feel the same way I do, but it is a whole lot harder for you to accept.

I hope you will not let your membership in our organization hinge on that sort of thing, because that attitude is Juvenile, and I am pretty dam sure you are not that kind of fellow. I feel sure that patience and good behaviour will, eventually, win out.

With all good wishes, and best personal regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Lynn A. Ferguson, M.D.

LAF/ew