

NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTIAL GREETINGS

The Seventy-First Annual Convention of the National Medical Association marks the seventh time that the convention has been held in the city of Chicago, which equals or exceeds all other cities. From the time of the first Chicago convention to August 1966 many changes, representing growth and progress, have occurred. Originally, many doctors came by horse-drawn carriage and primitive automobiles over undeveloped roads, stopping in intervening cities with former schoolmates, fellow physicians, and friends. Those were the days when an itinerary, beginning below Cincinnati by NMA, could not be consummated by rail except overnight in day coaches. The growth in transportation methods, if not in improved human relations along convention-bound trails for NMA members, is little short of incredibility. ^{paraphrase} In 1966 your Chicago hosts and hostesses are pleased to greet your arrival in air conditioned station wagons, after you have sped in luxurious comfort with your wives and children at a 70-mile clip over safe and ^{graded} great interstate expressways, or winged your way in minutes by astrojet. Our collective joy and pride in receiving you have not changed through the years, though names and persons may have changed with the ebb and flow of the tide of life. We are as honored to have you as our guests in our loop hotels as we were to host you in our private homes in yesteryear. We are as pleased to greet you and program your scientific deliberations and social amenities in the luxurious halls of world-famed hostelries as we were to swelter with you in the seats of children

in public school houses in years gone by.

Perhaps there are oldsters among our medics who would argue that the question is moot as to whether "tripping the light fantastic" under glittering bursts of reflected light from crystal-covered chandelabras and gold-tinted ceilings surpasses in sheer joy and relaxation that which obtained in the savoy ballrooms accented by tunes from the jazz bands of the Armstrongs and Peytons in days of old.

Whatever may be your scientific or social persuasion, we welcome you. We welcome you on behalf of all the living citizens of Chicago. We welcome you especially on behalf of the officers, members, and women's auxiliaries of the Cook County Physicians and Prairie State Medical Associations, and the committees on arrangements of the local host societies and the general officers of the National Medical Association. We welcome you particularly to Chicago because of the long and glorious history of Negro-Americans who participated in the founding and growth of our fair city and the State of Illinois. Chicago's very first permanent citizen was Jean Pointe DuSable, an Afro-Haitian, trader and explorer, who conducted fur trading expeditions from Canada to the Caribbean, built a hut and set up a trading post with the Indians at the mouth of the Chicago river at Lake Michigan, a few blocks from the principal hotel housing our guests.

Chicago and Illinois is the land of Lincoln, famed in the arts and higher education, as well as for statesmen. It is the modern city with "that great street" It is a city replete It is the modern city with "that great street and its magnificent mile."

It is a city replete with medical and scientific history of world significance. In Chicago, the world's first nuclear-chain reaction leading to the atomic bomb and interplanetary space missiles was developed under the stands of Stagg Field on the campus of the University of Chicago. Daniel Hale Williams, a member of the NMA - while a young surgeon and anatomy instructor at Northwestern University, performed the first successful suture of the human heart at Provident Hospital. This daring feat during the hot summer of 1893 repaired a stab wound of the pericardial sac, which nicked the heart muscle, before an awe-stricken interracial group of medical witnesses. This was no blind or misguided stunt -- it was a rapidly planned scientific exploration by a trained and courageous surgeon, based on his knowledge of animal experiments in Europe. Without miracle antiseptics and modern anesthesia, working in poorly-equipped surroundings, he was ready with the vision to recognize and grasp an opportunity that proved him a man of destiny. Chicago is the home of the John B. Murphys, the Sippys, DeLee, Herricks, Maximow's, Dragsteads and their medical progeny. It is also the home of the U.G. Daileys, the Halls, the Roberts, ~~and~~ Giles, and others who are our forebears and benefactors in the growth of the NMA.

~~Chicagoxxxxxxx~~

Chicago is the home of the youthful caravan led by the Andrew Thomases, the Jeanne Spurlocks, the Fredricks, the Quentin Youngs, and the Al Klingers who work 12 months to the year for the total community. They have looked over the vast horizon and fixed their sights on the rising sun of a new day for the goals of the NMA for all Americans, for the health of all humanity -- We welcome you to Chicago.

Leonidas H. Berry, M.D.
Outgoing President