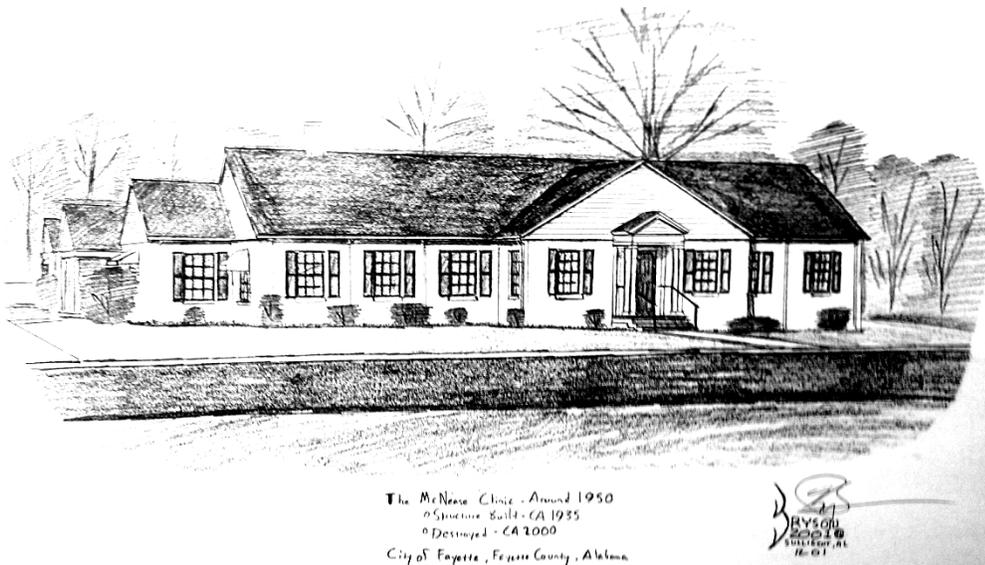


Fayette County Medicine: A History of Quality Healthcare In Rural Alabama

*The Physicians,
The McNease-Robertson-Hodo Clinic/Hospital,
and their Legacy*

By Harold Reed



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Foreword by John R. Wheat, MD, MPH

Perhaps as only a lifelong resident of a rural community can, Harold Reed has captured the insider's view of health care as it evolved in Fayette County, Alabama. Even better, he has lived much of this history as his own career in healthcare progressively climbed and peaked along with Fayette's medical community. He was there in a most personal way to benefit by the advances in medical education, technology, and the health care system that saved his life and in so doing preserved this remarkable history. It is a labor of love, perhaps even some hero worship, but it is more than a personal reminiscence; it has a scholarly bent. It is obvious that much research has been done to exact historical facts as far as possible, and at least a yeoman's effort has been made to place these facts in some order and in a broader context.

This historical narrative is remarkable for its view of health care from the countryside. Too often the story of human advancement is told from an urban or academic vantage point. In such cases, little is learned about the influence of the indigenous on societal developments. That story often tells of the shortcomings of rural healthcare and the virtues of urban outreach. This book is a rare look at history from the other side. We see where Fayette, Alabama, a small rural community, has valued modern medical care at every bend in the path of its history. We see leadership exerted by the men, and later the women, of medicine to set the course and the efforts of others to sustain the high ideals and maintain the direction. We see adaptations made to accommodate evolving policies and economic threats. We see through Harold Reed's eyes the gradual assembling of a network of relationships among physicians, staff, administrators, community, medical education institutions, and tertiary medical systems to provide the elasticity to bend and bow with the times, but to survive and sustain a the quality of care expected.

As Reed tells about each physician, we begin to see some patterns. Most of the physicians have small town or rural roots. Many grew up in or around the Fayette area. Harold Reed puts flesh on the bare bones of health workforce research that finds "rural background" to be an important factor in the production of rural

physicians. There are some familiar stereotypes found in this history--the faithful, overworked country doctor. Who could forget the anecdote shared of Dr. McNease establishing a special private place in town to park his car and catch a nap after the exhaustion of a day in the office and an evening on the back roads, but still be centrally available in case of sudden need? But perhaps surprising is the little heard story of how rural family physicians have had major impact on the development of medical education and on state professional associations. This is best exemplified by Dr. Rutland's key role in starting a medical school and residency training program at the University of Alabama, but also highlighted in Dr. John Morrison's unbending commitment to scholarship with surgery that reached world wide acclaim and landed him in a major state medical school to share his science and art with the next generation of surgeons.

Finally, there is something fresh in the way that Harold Reed portrays his colleagues and neighbors; after all, in a small town everyone are neighbors, as one can see in this narrative. We see physicians, nurses, administrators, technical and support staff as people who are not only engaged in their craft, but also in the community. These are people who identify with their community and expect the best for it, for the sake of their families and their neighbors. They are involved in health care, but also in the life of the community through civic organizations, religious affiliations, and public service.

For all these reasons, this book makes a contribution to the understanding of rural health care- where it has arrived and how it got here- that is missed by most histories of medicine. Besides that, it is a fun read.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the physicians and healthcare workers, those both named in this book and those unnamed, whose passion for their professions and commitment to the community led them to provide the highest quality healthcare possibly to the people of Fayette County and surrounding areas.

Preface

There have been constant improvements in the quality of healthcare worldwide over the last two centuries. These changes are documented typically through advances in urban and academic medical practice. Health care in rural places has not had the same public exposure, which might leave an impression that modern health care should not be expected to be found outside the city. However, this is not necessarily the case, as demonstrated in the remarkable efforts of health professionals down through the years in Fayette County, Alabama. The Fayette County medical community has a tradition of keeping up with the times.

Alabama was populated by Native Americans, then French and Spanish coming from Gulf of Mexico, and then by British and Americans filtering in from the North and East. Africans made a major contribution to opening this fertile new territory to agricultural production. Population shifts are accompanied by conflict, economic turmoil, and diseases. Alabama witnessed its share of these miseries with battles and wars, abject poverty, and always illness. Malaria, Yellow Fever, Pellagra, and Hookworms are but the most visible of the epidemics to plague the early settlers of Alabama. Life in these early years was a risky proposition due to hazardous occupations, infant deaths, and maternal difficulty with childbirth, infectious diseases, and the scarcity of physicians.

Alabama became a state on December 14, 1819. Five years later, Fayette County was formed. The "old Southwest" of Alabama and Mississippi was still being transformed from Native American to a European American and African American territory, attracting the farmers and plantation owners, land speculators, lawyers, storekeepers, physicians and others who would take the early risks that opened this region to modernization. As Alabama began to grow as a state, Fayette County kept pace, and its medical community proved to be at the forefront of local developments.

In the 1800s, the irregular, unregulated practice of medicine flourished everywhere. Estimates have shown that, in the early days of Alabama as a state, the number of irregular practitioners far exceeded the number of qualified physicians. There were German root doctors, homoeopaths, steam doctors, and black faith doctors as late as 1859. Healthcare in the late 1800s and the early part of the 1900s were provided mostly by country doctors who had little or no formal training. If a young man wanted to practice medicine, he would simply become an

apprentice to an established doctor and after several years of training hang up his own shingle. In addition to these doctors, many illnesses and disorders were treated by midwives, family remedies, and local druggists. (Howard L. Holley, MD, A History of Medicine in Alabama, 1997.)

Dr. Reuben Davis was one such doctor who trained as an apprentice. When he was 16 years old he moved to Monroe County, Mississippi to live with his sister and to apprentice with her husband, Dr. George Higgason. Reuben received his training by studying with Dr. Higgason and accompanying him on his visits to the sick. Much of their time, day and night, was spent in the saddle.

On December 24, 1828, Dr. Reuben Davis arrived in the small struggling town of Fayette Court House (the name of Fayette at that time) in Fayette County. He must be considered a good doctor for his time because of his preference for using Peruvian bark (made into a drug by Jesuit priests) and whiskey rather than purgatives and bleeding of patients, which were in vogue. In 1829, Dr. Davis married Mary Halbeert. And demonstrating the relative status of medicine at the time, he soon became interested in law, and in 1832 he and his wife left Fayette for Mississippi where he became a leading lawyer of the state. When the Civil War came he was a member of the Confederate Congress in Richmond, Va. He was known as a good lawyer and statesman. When he was a doctor in Fayette, he had a good practice and might have stayed, had his income not been so small. When he left for Mississippi he had \$3 in his pocket.

Later, Fayette County had doctors with at least some formal training, for which they were considered pioneers. Dr. A. Lanthus Blakeney (1883-1959) came from a farming family and was a life-long resident of Newtonville, Alabama, in southern Fayette County. He graduated from Grant Medical College in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1907 and immediately thereafter practiced one year in the Moore's Bridge Community in northern Tuscaloosa County. In 1908, he purchased the practice of W. W. Jones in nearby Newtonville. He married the former Velma Davis (1886-1984) of Kennedy, Alabama that same year and they had one son, Adolph. (Velma was the aunt of Dr. William Davis who currently has a practice in Vernon, Alabama and had admitting privileges at Fayette Medical Center until he chose to stop admitting.) Dr. Blakeney practiced medicine in Newtonville for 51 years with the assistance of his wife. Dr. Blakeney was civic minded and was a deacon in the Shepherd Baptist Church.



Dr. Blakeney, Velma and Adolph

Other practitioners in Fayette in the early 1900s included brothers Dr. J. A. Brandon (wife was Mrs Edna Brandon and Mr. Horace Berry was his grandson) and Dr. A. C. Brandon (grandfather of Jim Walter Brandon), Dr. A. J. Stewart, Dr. D. H. Wright, Dr. J. D. Young, and Richard D. Carter. Their names are familiar because some of them still have relatives living in Fayette County; however little information is available about these men. For example, their education and years of practice were not available publicly. There were others whose names have been forgotten.

Dr. Richard Carter practiced in Fayette around the late 1940s and early 1950s. Dr. Carter received his Doctor of Medicine from Tulane and, after a tour of duty in the Army, came to Fayette to practice until he could make enough money to complete a residency program in Internal Medicine, which he did in Birmingham. Dr. Carter later taught at UAB School of Medicine, but for most of his medical career worked with the State Health Department.

Medical education and medicine in the United State took a major turn toward science a decade into the Twentieth Century. The vast majority of medical schools of the day were privately owned by one or more doctors, and these were closed as a result of the Flexner Report, which favored medical schools as official

components of universities and affiliated with hospitals. In Alabama, as in the rest of the country, medical education was being re-designed based on this "German model," best exemplified in the United States by Johns Hopkins University.

Perhaps this overhaul of medical education accounts, in part, for the tremendous change in the quality of health services in the small rural community of Fayette, Alabama, when Benjamin Wilberne McNease, MD, arrived in 1926. Dr. McNease has been called the father of modern medicine in Fayette County, and he was said by some to be the first doctor in Fayette to be trained in a formal medical school in a scientific manner. He had five years of formal medical training, which for that time was well above average. Proverb 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision the people perish," and Dr. McNease brought both the vision and determination to improve the quality of healthcare in Fayette County, a task for which he was well prepared by his training.

Dr. McNease was followed to Fayette County by many other excellently trained doctors who also were determined to practice through trying circumstances that have affected Fayette along with other rural communities throughout the South. The economic ups and downs of agriculture and light manufacturing are perhaps uppermost in these stresses. Some physicians stayed for their entire careers, while others practiced in Fayette for only a short while before moving on. But each contributed to the continual improvement in the quality of healthcare in Fayette County. The people of Fayette County have been extremely fortunate over the years to have physicians who brought with them the benefits of a modern medical education.

As medicine and health care have become more complicated, the quality of care has come to depend increasingly on other employees and health professionals, in addition to doctors. Long term observers of Fayette's medical care system agree that employees in this growing healthcare profession have made major contributions and have assisted the doctors in every way possible. In the early years, doctors trained their own employees in the skills that were needed. The doctors and their assistants worked long hours under difficult circumstances without complaint. In those early years, there was a camaraderie and sense of family among those involved in the struggle against illness and disease. As we survey the uncertain status of health care in many rural communities throughout Alabama and the nation today, all the doctors and healthcare workers who worked to establish Fayette's remarkable healthcare system are to be commended for their

noble efforts. However, it is to Dr. B. W. McNease that we attribute the new and more modern approach to quality healthcare in Fayette County. He demonstrated that quality healthcare could be provided in a small community.

Benjamin Wilberne McNease, MD

General Practice

Dr. Benjamin Wilberne McNease was born on July 9, 1897, and raised in the small southeastern town of Carson, Mississippi. He attended the University of Mississippi for his undergraduate degree and was an outstanding player on the Ole Miss baseball team. He developed a life-long affection for Ole Miss athletics and often returned to Oxford for football games. Dr. McNease stayed at Ole Miss after college and completed his first two years, or pre-clinical years, of medical school. He then attended the University of Pennsylvania for his last two clinical years and received the Doctor of



Benjamin W. McNease, MD

Medicine Degree. He returned to the South for his internship at the Tennessee Coal and Iron (TCI) Hospital, later known as the Lloyd Noland Hospital, in Fairfield, Alabama. It was there that he met his loving wife Alma, who worked as a dietitian at TCI and later worked as a dietitian with the McNease-Robertson Hospital in Fayette. Dr. McNease depended on Alma for her steadfast support, personally and professionally.

Dr. McNease was considered a quick learner and a bright young man who enjoyed teaching. His interest of teaching carried over into Fayette when for several years Fayette served as a family practice preceptorship site for the University of Alabama School of Medicine in Birmingham, Alabama (now UAB).



B.W. McNease, Medical School

When Dr. McNease completed his year of internship at TCI, he took a teaching position at the University of Alabama School of Medicine, which was in Tuscaloosa at that time and provided the pre-clinical years of medical school. The school had an outstanding reputation for scientific-based training. Dr. McNease became known as an excellent instructor in several subjects, but he was best known for his classes in human anatomy. Through his training and academic work, he established contact with many other highly regarded doctors around the country with whom he could consult. At about this time, Joe Posey Robertson, plant manager for Brown Lumber Company in Fayette, recognized the need for a well qualified doctor in the area. He became aware of Dr. McNease and worked diligently and successfully to recruit Dr. McNease to Fayette. Dr. McNease arrived in Fayette on June 24, 1926, as the company doctor for Brown Lumber Company and soon became very busy with his own practice. He was reported to be the first doctor in Fayette to be trained in a formal, scientific manner; but if he was not the first, he was certainly the first to have the passion to start the tradition of quality healthcare that has been passed down from generation to generation. Dr. McNease was the father of modern medicine in Fayette County. He endured many difficulties in his quest to improve the healthcare of Fayette County and he dedicated his life to his profession. One difficulty Dr. McNease had to endure was

the lack of paved roads in Fayette County, and he made house calls all over the county. The first paved road in Fayette County was Temple Avenue. It was paved from the depot to the first intersection beyond the First Baptist Church in 1926, the same year Dr. McNease came to Fayette.



B.W. McNease, MD

On the first day that Dr. McNease saw patients in Fayette, T. H. Robertson, president of Citizens Bank of Fayette, had a motorcycle accident and became one of Dr. McNease's first patients. Robertson was seriously injured, but was well cared. The paths of these two community leaders crossed again shortly thereafter when Dr. McNease needed financial assistance in building a clinic and hospital.

When Dr. McNease arrived in Fayette he brought with him current knowledge of modern medicine. The community appreciated the standards he set in high quality and compassionate healthcare that he provided. He had a clear vision of how healthcare services should and could be improved and expanded to better serve the area.

From the very beginning, Dr. McNease was so busy that it was not unusual for him to see 40 patients a day in his office, then leave for house calls. He soon knew every country road in Fayette County, and after working long hours he could

fall asleep anywhere. Dr. McNease had a few places where he could stop and get a quick nap when he was out making house calls. One place he especially liked was behind Mr. Thomas Lindsey's home, which was centrally located near the First Methodist Church. He could pull his car around back of Mr. Lindsey's house where he knew no one could see him and he would not be disturbed.

Probably one of the most trying times for Dr. McNease in his early years in Fayette came during the flu epidemic in 1929. During that time, he and his wife Alma often took into their home the care of 20 to 30 patients, while also continuing his office practice. To make things even more difficult, the Great Depression was starting during 1929-30. Penicillin had been discovered by Alexander Fleming in 1928 and would have been of great help at that time in Fayette, but it did not become available until many years later.

Dr. McNease had a heavy workload, but he saw the value in being involved in organized medicine, also. He was once president of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, Chairman of the State Board of Censors, and Chairman of the State Board of Health. He was also a delegate to the American Medical Association.

Dr. McNease was so busy with his practice that his daughter, Pat McCrackin, who became a pharmacist, said that she once went three weeks without seeing her father. "He was gone in the mornings before I got up and he came home after I was asleep," she said.

Dr. Henry Hodo, in reference to Dr. McNease, quoted Ben Franklin as saying, "In darkness as in light our responsibilities are with us." Then he said, "It was this sense of duty and responsibility for the healthcare of the people of this area that prompted Dr. B. W. McNease to build a clinic and a hospital."

Dr. McNease saw a great need for a modern clinic to expand his ability to meet the needs of the area, and in April of 1936 he purchased for \$500 a small piece of property on which to build a clinic. The site was a perfect place for a clinic. It was downtown in a convenient location and had a beautiful, large oak tree that stood at the rear of the clinic. This oak tree was over 100 years old and was later marked with a plaque as a "Champion Tree" by the Alabama Forestry Commission for being the largest of its species in Alabama.

The Citizens Bank of Fayette saw tremendous value in lending the money to construct a modern clinic in Fayette. However, such a loan was considered a high risk during the poor economy, and banker Robertson thought that the bank

examiners would question it. To prevent any possible issues, Robertson moved the loan from the bank to his store, the T. H. Robertson and Son General Mercantile store, where the loan would not be subject to review by bank auditors. The Robertson and Son store was very large and was located on the city block behind where the bank is located currently.

The McNease Clinic was completed in 1937 for a cost of \$11,000. It featured twelve examination rooms, a modern x-ray machine, a sun lamp, ultraviolet rays, and other equipment representing the latest technology. Dr. McNease, with his new, modern clinic, offered a wide range of healthcare services to his patients. Many locals believe that Dr. McNease would not have started construction of his clinic-hospital unless he had known that Dr. Banks Robertson, a general surgeon, was coming to Fayette after completing his general surgery residency; and Dr. Robertson did come to Fayette and had a very busy and successful practice.

Immediately after construction of the clinic was complete, construction of the adjoining McNease-Robertson Hospital was started. The hospital made it possible to admit patients and to perform surgery locally. Prior to the hospital being built, it was not unusual for Dr. McNease to place a patient in a hotel room to give him fluids, because the nearest hospital was in Jasper or Tuscaloosa. Sometimes, for seriously ill patients Dr. McNease would ride the train with them to Jasper to be admitted. The McNease-Robertson Hospital, when completed, was equipped with modern, efficient medical equipment and had a bed capacity for 17 patients. It was later expanded to 21 patients. Room rates were \$5 per day for a private room and \$3 per day for ward beds.

The hospital was staffed only by nurses who were graduates of a three-year Nursing program. For living quarters the nurses had a house just to the rear of the hospital. At that time the only practical options for a hospital stay were in Jasper, Tuscaloosa, or Fayette. The facility was costly to operate, but Dr. McNease and Dr. Robertson focused more on their patients' healthcare needs than on their ability to pay.

Dr. McNease and Dr. Robertson continued to operate the clinic-hospital throughout World War II (1939-45). Dr. McNease was 43 years old when the war started, too old to be drafted into military service. However, he served his country at home as physician and as chairman of the local Selective Services Board. If he had tried to join, he probably would have been sent home due to his critically

important role as doctor in the community. During the war, his practice was extremely busy—he is quoted as saying, “If there is another war I sure as hell will volunteer before I will stay here and work like this”.

Because of years of uncompensated, patriotic service to the nation on the Selective Services Board, Dr. McNease received certificates of appreciation from four different Presidents of the United States. The certificates were signed also by the Governors of Alabama. These certificates are on display by the Fayette Historical Society at the Fayette Depot. The signing officials were as follows:

Governors of Alabama

Chauncey Sparks
 Jim Folsom
 Gordon Persons
 John Patterson

Presidents of the United States

Franklin D. Roosevelt
 Harry Truman
 Dwight Eisenhower
 John F. Kennedy

Dr. McNease was sometimes accused of being rough with his patients, which was attributed to his having a large patient load and not enough time. He certainly was a compassionate man with a big heart and at times demonstrated quite a sense of humor. In one instance, Dr. McNease walked into the exam room to see a small boy with his mother. The young boy had cut his knee on a broken soft drink bottle and the wound needed several stitches. The boy was on the verge of tears, when Dr. McNease looked at the chart and said in his deep voice, “Young man, did you know you and I are the same age? My birthday is July 10 just like yours.” The boy made no comment but had a sheepish grin. Dr. McNease continued to care for the boy, and the boy remained calm throughout the procedure.

Benjamin Wilburn McNease, MD, was a dominant figure in medicine for 46 years in Fayette County. He operated the only clinic-hospital in Fayette County for 21 years, and his name remains associated with the highest quality of healthcare. Dr. McNease was very busy, but he was also involved in the community and never neglected his family or his church. He was a man of firm resolve, but he also had a compassionate heart and cared greatly for his family, his community, and his fellow man. He was also instrumental in bringing into Fayette young doctors who shared his concern for high quality healthcare services.

John Banks Robertson, Sr., MD
General Surgery

Dr. John Banks Robertson, Sr. was a man with great passion for everything he undertook. He grew up in Lamar County, adjacent to Fayette County, in Vernon, Alabama and was a bright student and outstanding athlete. He was a star running back for the Vernon High School football team and received a full scholarship to the University of Alabama to play football. However, in his sophomore year he injured his right knee and was unable to continue to play. He gave up his scholarship and worked at various jobs to continue his studies at the University. Dr. Robertson was friends with Alabama football alumnus Bill “Swamp” Sanders, a Fayette native who might well have had some influence on Dr. Robertson later locating his medical practice in Fayette.



John Banks Robertson, Sr., MD

Dr. Robertson completed his undergraduate degree and the two pre-clinical years of medical school at the University of Alabama, which did not yet have the clinical years. From there he went to Tulane University School of Medicine for his two clinical years and in 1934 he received the Doctor of Medicine Degree. He then went to Hillman Hospital in Birmingham, where he completed his intern year on June 30, 1935, and two years of surgery residency in June 1937.

As an intern at Hillman Hospital, Dr. Robertson was given room, board, laundry, and whites, as scrubs were called at that time. He was paid \$10 per month, \$5 of which he sent home to assist his parents. Hillman Hospital had an outstanding reputation as a teaching hospital and Dr. Robertson said, “Hillman was one of the best training facilities in the country.” Later, other Fayette physicians including Doctors Henry Hodo, Inez Fowler, and Richard Rutland received some training at Hillman Hospital prior to coming to Fayette.

The history of Hillman began around 1870 when several attempts were made to organize a hospital for the indigent in Birmingham. The society of the United Charities was organized in January of 1884 and resolved to build and maintain

such a hospital. After many years of financial difficulties, being destroyed by fire, relocating and rebuilding, having changes in ownership and enduring disasters, it continued to survive. In 1940, the 575-bed Jefferson Hospital was built adjacent to the Hillman Hospital and together they became known as the Jefferson-Hillman Hospital. In 1943, the question arose as to where to locate a proposed University of Alabama four-year medical school. On December 20, 1944, the Jefferson-Hillman hospital was given outright to the University of Alabama. The four-year Medical College of Alabama became a reality in 1945 when the University of Alabama two-year School of Medicine moved from Tuscaloosa to the Jefferson-Hillman Hospital in Birmingham. Jefferson-Hillman was renamed the University of Alabama Hospital and Hillman Clinics in 1955, and in 1965 it became the University of Alabama Hospitals and Clinics. Today it is named UAB Hospital as part of the University of Alabama at Birmingham and is owned by the State of Alabama.

During Dr. Robertson's last year at Hillman Hospital, he was named Chief Resident. Chief residents at that time were responsible for more than just their sub-specialty; they were chief resident of all services. Dr. Robertson's abilities were not only noted by his being named Chief Resident, but also by his being a board-certified member of the American College of Surgeons. At the time he completed his residency in June of 1937, it was a difficult time to start a practice. Everyone was trying to recover from the Great Depression of 1929–30, and Germany had invaded Poland on September 1, 1936, to start World War II. These difficulties didn't deter Dr. Robertson, however, because he had great respect for Dr. McNease and shared a vision with him for the provision of quality healthcare in and around Fayette County. Dr. Robertson was anxious to locate his practice in Fayette because it was close to his family in Vernon and he had a strong desire to help patients of all socioeconomic levels in the area.

Dr. McNease constructed his clinic the same year Dr. Robertson started his practice in Fayette. It had the best of



Dr. John B. Robertson, Sr.

everything for its day. As soon as the clinic was complete, construction of the adjoining hospital was begun. When completed, the hospital had the most modern equipment available, which allowed the doctors to provide a wide range of services to their patients. Dr. Robertson realized those were difficult times for his patients; his son, John Banks Robertson, Jr., stated that his father told him that he never charged as much as \$100 for any surgery except for two extremely difficult cases. Dr. Robertson worked extremely long hours and even lived in the back of the hospital during the first few years of his practice. After a long normal day in surgery and seeing patients in the clinic, Dr. Robertson and Dr. McNease would divide the county in half and make house calls until late into the night. Either before or after house calls, Dr. Robertson would make evening rounds in the hospital.

After arriving in Fayette, Dr. Robertson met and married his wife Ms. Jeff Richards. Dr. Robertson was a loving husband and father and his wife was constantly at his side, supporting him in every way possible. Quite interestingly, Ms. Richards came from a highly motivated and successful family. Her father, Mr. A.J. Richards, was a successful business man in Fayette. He owned and operated several businesses including the power company, which supplied electrical power to the city. Mr. Richards also built the first movie theater in Fayette, which was run later by his daughter, Lucile Cobb, and grandson, R. C. Cobb. They built a theater of their own in Fayette on the corner of the courthouse lawn and named it the Richards Theater after Mr. Richards. This theater business grew from its small beginnings in Fayette to what is today the widely known Cobb Theaters.

Another of Mr. Richards's daughters was nicknamed "Temp." She married Don Hudson, a famous football player at the University of Alabama. He played at the same time as Paul "Bear" Bryant, both playing at the end position. However, Don was so good that Bear Bryant referred to himself as the "other end". Don was an All American while at Alabama and later played for the Green Bay Packers for 11 years, 10 of which he was All Pro.

Wiley Clements, one of the hospital's male employees, was a great asset to Dr. Robertson, who trained Wiley to be an excellent assistant. Wiley could put on casts, insert catheters and do anything else Dr. Robertson trained him to do. It was said that Dr. Robertson had to show Wiley only one time and he would be able to carry out the task from then on. In addition to helping patients, Wiley had his

share of housekeeping and maintenance work to attend to. Wiley was also a great help to Dr. McNease and would accompany each of the doctors on trips.

Dr. Robertson made sure the standards of care provided at the small Fayette hospital were equal to the American College of Surgeons standards, whose accreditation he sought because it was the only accrediting agency for healthcare facilities at that time. However, the American College of Surgeons would not accredit any hospital smaller than 25 beds. Dr. Robertson, with all his efforts, could not convince them to come to Fayette to survey the McNease-Robertson Hospital. Finally one day, Dr. Jim Mason, a friend and mentor of Dr. Robertson's during his residency program, called Dr. Robertson from Jasper to tell him there was a survey team from the American College of Surgeons conducting a survey at the Jasper hospital. Dr. Robertson immediately went to Jasper and carried patient medical records with him to demonstrate to the surveyors the quality of work being done at his small hospital in Fayette. He was able to persuade the survey team to come to Fayette to conduct the required survey. Meanwhile, a few hectic hours were spent rounding up enough cribs to meet the required number of 25 beds. While conducting its review, the survey team was favorably impressed with everything it saw, especially the completeness of the medical records. The McNease-Robertson Hospital won the distinction of being the smallest hospital in the United States ever accredited by the American College of Surgeons.

Though Dr. Robertson worked very hard to achieve accreditation by the American College of Surgeons, he gave Dr. McNease all the credit for the high standards of care provided at the McNease-Robertson Clinic-Hospital. The two doctors were an excellent healthcare team.

Dr. Robertson was also active on the state level. He was chairman of the Alabama Hospital Association in 1941-42 and was actively involved in organizing Blue Shield of Alabama.

Dr. Robertson continued his exceptional work for ten years until he was forced to retire in 1947 due to his health. In his ten short years of practice, Dr. Robertson made a profound impact on the medical history of Fayette County. Even in retirement, Dr. Robertson retained his passion for doing what he could in the community. He became the Fayette County Health Officer and in that role placed great emphasis on disease prevention. He took an active interest in politics, which included serving two terms as chairman of the Fayette County Board of Education. He helped organize the Fayette Park and Recreation Board in 1955 and served as

its first chairman. He was also interested in civic work and was active in the First United Methodist Church, where he was a board member, trustee and chairman of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee. Dr. Robertson was noted as an outstanding leader in the community and in 1955 he was chosen by the Exchange Club as the man of the year for Fayette County.

Dr. John Banks Robertson, Sr. was a determined, passionate individual who sought excellence in everything he did. He loved his family and was a willing and constant supporter in all areas of community.

Henry Gunter Hodo, Jr., MD

General Surgery and Family Practice

Dr. Hodo was born and raised in Millport, Alabama, in Lamar County about 15 miles from Fayette. He graduated from Millport High School in 1932. He attended the University of Alabama and completed his undergraduate degree in 1936. Since this was before the University had a four year medical school, he remained at the University for the pre-clinical years of medical school and went to the University of Pennsylvania for the clinical years. He returned to Birmingham, Alabama, to the well-known Hillman Hospital for his intern year and three years as a surgery resident.



Henry G. Hodo, Jr., MD

Dr. Hodo was recognized as an excellent surgeon, even in his residency. Local surgeons practicing in Birmingham came to Hillman just to watch Dr. Hodo perform surgery. After residency, Dr. Hodo served as a surgeon with the Army Medical Corps for two years during World War II, seeing duty in both the European and Pacific Theatres. He was being transferred from Brooke Army General Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, to Fort McPherson, Georgia, when he stopped in Fayette to visit his wife Naomi's relatives at about the time Dr. Banks Robertson retired due to health reasons. While in Fayette, Dr. McNease asked him to do an emergency caesarian section on one of his patients. Dr. McNease saw

what a good surgeon Dr. Hodo was and immediately began recruiting him. Within a few months, Dr. Hodo was back in Fayette with his wife Naomi and he was immediately busy with a meaningful practice that would continue for fifty years. “I went to work the day we arrived,” Dr. Hodo said. “We stayed in the Brock home (his wife’s parents) because there was no place for us to live, but we soon got an apartment,” he added.

Dr. Hodo started his practice in Fayette in 1946 and immediately assumed the responsibility of administrator of the McNease-Robertson Hospital in addition to the duties of surgeon. He became a one of the community's leading figures.

Dr. Hodo maintained a heavy surgery load, as had Dr. Robertson before him, and also carried out the duties of a family doctor. His typical day started with push-ups and sit-ups before he left home at 5:30 a. m. to make two or three house calls. He usually arrived at the hospital at 7:30 a. m. to perform surgeries before trying to get to his office by noon to see patients. He normally left the office around 7 p. m., returned to the hospital for evening rounds, then made four or five more house calls before arriving home for dinner around 10 p. m.

Due to Dr. Hodo’s long days, he made it clear that he required fidelity to his routine to stay on schedule. After Fayette County Hospital opened, all doctors were assigned private parking spaces. Dr. Hodo’s was near the Emergency Department, and on one occasion Dr. Hodo arrived to find that a visitor had parked in his space. Dr. Hodo pulled his car against the visitor’s bumper and proceeded into surgery for half a day.

Dr. Hodo said that in those days the family doctor was not only the healer of sickness, but also a confidant, trusted friend, sounding board and problem solver for many things not related to a person’s physical well-being. “I remember when the old hospital first began charging an emergency room fee,” he said, “I was accosted by an irate little lady who thoroughly raked me over the coals because she was charged \$2, as she said, ‘for just settin in the settin room’.”

Dr. Hodo became a leading force in developing the new hospital, seeing it arrive as one of the most modern of its day. Dr. Hodo did 500 to 600 surgeries per year and said that his biggest operation was removing a 55-pound fibroid tumor from a woman’s abdomen. During his career as a surgeon and family doctor, he performed over 22,000 surgeries and delivered thousands of babies. “Yes, it was exhausting, but you did it because you loved it and because of the gratification you received from it,” he said. “You didn’t have to worry about government

regulations or malpractice. You worried only about the patient and practiced medicine to the very best of your ability.”

Dr. Hodo continued the untiring efforts of Dr. McNease and Dr. Robertson to build an excellent health care system in Fayette. His contributions were significant and appreciated. Dr. Hodo was so respected and honored by his peers that, when the doctors occupied a new clinic across from Fayette County Hospital in 1979, they named it the McNease-Hodo Clinic.

As the only surgeon in Fayette for most of his career, Dr. Hodo had a very busy practice, but he was active also in the affairs of professional societies at the local, state, and federal levels. This service included:

- President of Fayette County Hospital Medical Staff, where he chaired every medical staff committee and related hospital committees.
- President of the Alabama College of Surgeons.
- Fayette County Hospital Board of Directors from 1976-1984.
- Member of the Southern Medical Association.
- Fellow of both the Southeastern College of Surgeons and the American College of Surgeons.
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield Board of Directors for many years, starting in 1970.
- Recipient of the Ira L. Myers Service Award in 2001 from the Alabama Public Health Association.
- Board of Medical Examiners and State Board of Health, 1970-1991.

Dr. Hodo was twice asked to accept the position of president of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama (MASA), but declined both times, stating he was the only surgeon in Fayette and he could not be away for that length of time.

Dr. Hodo was an active, contributing member of the community all the time he was in Fayette. He and Naomi had one son and two granddaughters, the oldest of which was chosen as a Rhodes Scholar. He was also chairman of the Board of Trustees for the First United Methodist Church in Fayette, a member of the Fayette Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Trustees and Fayette Industrial Development Board, and a Charter Member of the Fayette Exchange Club. Dr. Hodo retired as a surgeon in December 1983, but continued to see patients in his clinic for another year and assumed the duties of Medical Director of Long Term Care. His medical career spanned over 50 years.

Soon after Dr. Hodo's retirement and while he was Medical Director of the Long Term Care in 1988, Hospital Administrator John Lucas provided the following tribute to Dr. Hodo in special recognition for his many years of dedication and support:

"We are privileged to live in a country that has the finest medical facilities in the world. Fayette County Hospital boasts the latest technological equipment and is the most modern and up-to-date rural institution in the state. We are truly blessed. Such dramatic progress doesn't happen without the courageous and dynamic leadership of individuals who have persevered in developing our healthcare system. We have been so busy building on the blocks they put in place that we never have given the recognition they so richly deserve. I would like to pay tribute to one of those great pioneers of Fayette County who has made possible all that we are lucky enough to take for granted today." In Special recognition of Dr. Hodo, John Lucas, 1988

When asked about Dr. Hodo, Mrs. Hodo said, "There are two things about Henry: he works hard and he is just an all-around good guy." Also, she said, "He worked hard and should be remembered for all he gave to the people of this community and should receive all their appreciation."

In 1997 Dr. Hodo was recognized and honored for his faithful service of 50 years and the newly constructed surgery wing at Fayette Medical Center was named after him. A plaque so designating was placed in the hallway entering the surgery department with wording as follows:

*The Surgical Wing of Fayette Medical Center
Is Dedicated to
Henry Gunter Hodo Jr., MD*

Who has faithfully served the medical profession in Fayette County for more than fifty years and has led a life of the highest professional and personal merit. Dr. Hodo is known far and wide for his expertise as a surgeon and a family physician. He has devoted his adult life to improving the quality of medical care for the people throughout Alabama and has been as pillar of strength and inspiration for other physicians who followed in his footsteps.

Much of the success of Fayette Medical Center today can be directly attributed to his strong leadership and involvement. Dedicated June 19, 1997

Dr. Hodo was a man of determination, strong will, and character. He could be a good friend and he enjoyed a little humor along the way, but he also believed that everyone should play by the rules.

Inez Fowler, MD

General Practice, Psychiatry

Dr. Inez Fowler was a native of Fayette County and came from a small family. She never married and had only one sister, but was very self-sufficient. In her years of retirement, she often proclaimed, “I was married to my profession.” She had great passion for her work and gave much of her life to medicine and the people of Fayette County.

Dr. Fowler served the Fayette community in three different healthcare roles. First, she was a laboratory technician at the McNease–Robertson Clinic-Hospital. Later, she became a primary care physician. She finished her medical career as a psychiatrist in private practice.

Dr. Fowler attended the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa and received her undergraduate degree in 1941. She was accepted to the Medical College of Alabama, but due to the United States' preparations for World War II, which were heightened by the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the United States Army and Navy took control of medical education and excluded females. This was in keeping with policies to train and draft medical personnel for deployment in war zones, which at the time excluded women. (See William S. Mullins, ed. *Medical Department, United States Army Medical Training in World War II*. Accessed at



Inez Fowler, MD

<http://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwii/medtrain/ch1.htm>.) Instead of going to medical school, Dr. Fowler received training as a laboratory technician. She returned to Fayette and worked in the laboratory of McNease-Robertson Clinic-Hospital until World War II ended in 1945.

When females were again accepted into medical schools in 1945, Dr. Fowler was admitted and had the honor of being the only person from Fayette County to receive a four-year medical scholarship from a government entity, presumably the state of Alabama. That same year, the University of Alabama School of Medicine was relocated from Tuscaloosa to Birmingham and expanded to a full four-year program of study. Dr. Fowler graduated with honors in 1949 among the first class to graduate from this "new" four-year Medical College of Alabama. She stayed in Birmingham and completed an internship at Jefferson-Hillman Hospital where she first met Dr. Richard Rutland, another intern.

The internship was a very strenuous year, especially the obstetrics rotation, with both Dr. Fowler and Rutland carrying heavy work load. There were only 10 interns, a staff half the size needed for a hospital as large as the Jefferson -Hillman Hospital. Two of the interns had been classmates of Dr. Rutland at Tulane, but there was little time to socialize. It was a tough year for both Dr. Fowler and Dr. Rutland.

Following the intern year, Dr. Fowler served as Medical Director/Administrator at the Mobile Red Cross Blood Center for a year before returning to Fayette. "I returned to Fayette to fulfill my life-long dream of practicing medicine with my idol, Dr. Benjamin Wilberne McNease," she said. Dr. Fowler had known Dr. McNease all her life. She had been his patient, had observed and admired his work, and was highly influenced by him in her plans to become a physician.

While in Fayette, Dr. Fowler delivered a large number of babies and said she experienced discrimination for being a female only once when she was called to deliver a baby for a physician who was out of town. The woman's husband ranted and raved, saying that no woman would deliver a baby of his. Dr. Fowler said that she told him that he was free to take his wife elsewhere. The husband grumbled, but allowed her to proceed. Dr. Fowler delivered the child and subsequently delivered two more children for the couple. In those busy early years of practice she did not miss the opportunity to recruit additional help when her colleague from

the internship days, Richard Rutland, called to explore the potential for a practice site in Fayette.

In 1958, after six years of practice in Fayette, Dr. Fowler required surgery for a bone tumor. The remaining physicians took on her patient load, and Dr. Breitling was added to the local medical staff in 1959. As much as she loved providing primary care in Fayette with Dr. McNease, Dr. Hodo, and Dr. Rutland, Dr. Fowler discovered her greatest interest was in behavioral medicine. As she recovered from surgery, she applied for and received a scholarship for five years of training in adult and child psychiatry at the University of Alabama School of Medicine in Birmingham. Upon completing training in psychiatry, she directed a mental health service for University of Alabama students in Birmingham for two years. She then established a private practice of psychiatry in Tuscaloosa. At one time Dr. Fowler was the only person certified in both child and adult psychiatry in Alabama.

Dr. Fowler closed her psychiatric practice in Tuscaloosa and moved back home to Fayette in 1973 to support her father during an illness he contracted and to assume primary family responsibilities related to a niece, with child, who had been abandoned by her husband. While in Fayette, she accepted a part-time position with Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center in Hamilton for one year and also maintained a part-time private psychiatry practice in Fayette. She opened an office in a house across the street from her home. She was appreciated for her expertise in psychiatry, but had to reduce her work load in her later years.

“I lived the life of a woman who dared to enter the male-dominated field of medicine and to work harder to achieve,” Dr. Fowler said at the end of her career. She also made the observation that "many more women have entered medicine and have been accepted, for the most part, as equals, though still having to prove themselves capable."

Dr. Fowler was a person of exceptional knowledge and ability. She was a very independent lady with strong fortitude and she cared deeply for her profession, her patients, and family. She was loyal to the Fayette Church of Christ.

Richard Oliver Rutland, Jr., MD

Family Practice

Dr. Richard Oliver Rutland, Jr. was born in the small town of Eufaula in Southeast Alabama, in 1926—the same year that Dr. McNease came to Fayette. “I hero worshiped Paul P. Salter, my family doctor in Eufaula,” Dr. Rutland said. Dr. Salter was a family doctor and surgeon, a typical generalist of his day, and the father and grandfather of surgeons. He greatly influenced Dr. Rutland's decision to go into medicine and also to go to medical school at Tulane University, Dr. Salter's alma mater. “Dr. Salter set my course on entering a general practice of medicine,” Dr. Rutland said. “He was the type of doctor you grew up with and the kind of doctor you wanted to be.”



Richard O. Rutland, Jr., MD

Dr. Rutland did not complete high school due to the certainty that he would be drafted into the armed forces during World War II as soon as he was old enough. He knew he wanted to be a doctor and he was instructed to complete as much of his education as possible before being drafted. Needing fifteen high school credits to be admitted to college, he worked diligently and went to summer school at Tuscaloosa High School for two classes to complete those requirements. One of the classes at Tuscaloosa High was an English class where he met Nancy Babb, the beautiful young lady from Texas who later would become a large part of his life.

Dr. Rutland passed the college entrance exams easily and attended the University of Alabama for just over one year before joining the V-12 Navy College Training Program. This program was designed to augment the flow of college-educated commissioned officers needed by the Navy by supporting young men who had enlisted in the Navy to attend college. (Alison C. V-12: The Navy College Training Program, <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~uscnotc/V-12/v12-his.htm>). He was not

deployed immediately in the war, because the Navy wanted him to be a doctor. Instead, they sent him to Duke University where he completed the premedical education requirements needed to enter medical school at Tulane. He received active duty pay while in the V-12 program, which helped greatly with college expenses. After rushing through the requirements of high school and college, the Navy also sent him to medical school at Tulane School of Medicine. There were no shortcuts for the four years of medical education. However, World War II ended in 1945, his freshman year in medical school, and he was taken off active duty, which meant no more military pay. Fortunately, his parents could help with his medical school expenses.

During the first two years of pre-clinical medical training, he received a good foundation in the sciences, especially pharmacology. However, the patient contact of the two clinical years made those his favorite years of medical school. He enjoyed most the summers during these clinical years when he returned home to work with his childhood hero and mentor, Dr. Paul Salter.

Dr. Rutland received the Doctor of Medicine degree from Tulane School of Medicine in 1949. In the late 1940's Tulane was considered possibly the best medical school in the South. Dr. Rutland said of his time at Tulane, "I was fortunate to have learned from some of the finest medical minds in the world." One was Dr. Alton Ochsner, the famous surgeon for whom the renowned Ochsner Clinic is named. Ochsner contributed to discovering the connection between smoking and lung cancer.

Dr. Rutland also spoke of his classmates, saying "My classmates were exceedingly bright, fascinating people." His most interesting classmate was Dr. Robert W. Brown, better known as Bobby Brown, the third baseman for the New York Yankees with a batting average of .500 in the World Series. Bobby's teammates included Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, Phil Rizzuto, Whitey Ford and Yogi Berra. Bobby alternated playing baseball for six months with attending Tulane for six months, until he completed his medical degree.

From Tulane, Dr. Rutland came to Birmingham to the Jefferson-Hillman Hospital for his internship. There he met Dr. Inez Fowler and they became close friends. The internship program was seriously understaffed, so they came to rely on each other to survive the workload. It was a trying year.

Dr. Rutland has enjoyed telling about a remarkable event that occurred during his intern year, during a very busy obstetrics rotation. As he walked past an

open window, a loud racket from the parking lot caught his attention. He looked out to see a winsome young woman scratching off in a sporty red car. He quickly identified her as Nancy Bebb, his attractive classmate in English at Tuscaloosa High School. It did not take long for them to renew their acquaintance and become close friends.

The Korean War started in 1950 during his intern year, and Dr. Rutland was placed back on active duty. The benefits of active duty, even while still an intern, made it feasible for him to consider marriage. Nancy agreed, and they were soon wed. At the end of the internship, he was required to serve two years in support of the Navy. His first duty assignment was Key West, Florida, which offered the young couple the honeymoon trip they never had. From Key West, Dr. Rutland was scheduled to receive orders to ship out. But when he realized he would miss the birth of their first child, he requested and received a change of orders that delayed his departure. Later, he served in both the Pacific and Korean Theaters. During one excursion when he was the only Medical Officer aboard an amphibious cargo ship, it became necessary for him to remove the hot appendix of a Navy chief petty officer. It was a trying experience. The operating room conditions were very poor and the ship was rocking. Dr. Rutland had only his internship year behind him, but he had assisted surgeons in surgery at Jefferson-Hillman Hospital. With five corpsmen to assist him, only one of whom had ever helped in surgery, he braced the stressful task and got a good outcome.

After the Navy, Dr. Rutland determined to complete two years of general practice residency. The first year was at Bakersfield, California, and the second was at the University of Colorado in Denver. He and Nancy were not happy with Bakersfield-- it rained only once while they were there, but they experienced frightening earthquakes and aftershocks. The only thing good to come out of Bakersfield for them was a second child, a daughter. They liked Denver much better.

After residency, Dr. Rutland intended to follow the model of Dr. Salter and complete additional training in surgery. He began a discussion with Dr. Champ Lyons, Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Jefferson-Hillman Hospital. While still in the discussion over three (Dr. Lyons' preference) versus two years (Dr. Rutland's intention) of surgery training, Dr. Rutland met Dr. John Hodo. Dr. John Hodo told Dr. Rutland about his brother Henry, a general surgeon in Fayette, and how he would be an excellent surgeon with whom to train. He also said that

Fayette needed a doctor just like Dr. Rutland. Dr. Rutland called Dr. Inez Fowler, his friend and workmate from their internship who was then in Fayette, and asked if there was an opportunity in Fayette. Her response was, “How fast can you get here?”

It was 1954; Dr. Rutland did not know that he was beginning a lifetime of work in Fayette, Alabama, or that he was so well prepared for the task. Like those before him, he had dedicated his life to the medical profession, but he thought coming to Fayette was to learn surgery skills from Dr. Hodo and fulfill his dream of becoming like Dr. Salter. He thought he would be moving on to another small town to practice. However, while learning from Dr. Hodo and providing family care, his own family continued to grow. He and Nancy added another daughter and son in short order. (Dr. Rutland delivered his son because the baby boy was early and Nancy’s doctor was out of town at an Alabama-Auburn football game.) Along the way, his ambitions changed, Fayette grew to fulfill the dream he had pursued since childhood, and Alabama was to witness the growth of an icon in family medicine.



Dr. Rutland and Dr. B.W. McNease

Dr. Rutland assisted Dr. Hodo on numerous cases and performed many surgeries himself, finding contentment in his work and in the community. He once said “My infatuation with becoming a physician was predicated on learning to relate to people. I gradually learned to walk figuratively in the shoes of my patients, whatever their status in life, and yet maintain a reasonable degree of objectivity.” And his own influence began to be felt in the community as he had felt that of Dr. Salter. For example, while still in his early years of practice in Fayette, Dr. Rutland made a house call in Kennedy, Alabama, at the home of an elderly gentleman. The man’s grandson

was there and observed Dr. Rutland as he cared for his grandfather. When Dr. Rutland left, the young boy determined, “I want to be a doctor like that man.” The

grandson, William A. Curry, was to create his own professional identity including 15 years of practice in Carrollton, Alabama, leadership in the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, the deanship of the University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences, and higher administration at the UAB School of Medicine.

Dr. Rutland's career encompassed the great change in medicine that occurred following World War II. When he began practice at the McNease-Hodo Clinic, he did his own x-rays, developed them and read them himself. At the time of his retirement, he could order a CT or MRI at the hospital and expect a timely interpretation of the results provided by a board certified radiologist located miles away in another city via telemedicine.

As he mastered his art in rural family practice, Dr. Rutland's influence expanded through the community and the medical profession. Because of their confidence in him, his peers propelled him to leadership in the state's family physicians organization. In 1961, he was elected president of the Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians. While serving in this capacity, he became concerned about the growing trend among newly educated physicians to sub-specialize, instead of pursuing general practice. His childhood role model and his experience caring for Fayette confirmed for him that physicians who were broadly trained to care for the large majority of health care concerns experienced by most patients was the principal medical education need in the state. He expressed this view broadly and looked for the opportunity to lead Alabama's medical education program in this direction. When fourth year medical student Lee Taylor in Birmingham started the push for a clinical rotation in an outlying area, Dr. Rutland was quick to respond. In 1966, he worked with the University of Alabama School of Medicine, located in Birmingham, to have Fayette approved as a preceptor site for fourth-year medical students. In the fifteen years that followed, almost fifty students and family practice residents took clinical rotations in Fayette, learning from accomplished local physicians in their offices, the hospital, and community settings. The people of Fayette were proud partners in the effort to produce physicians who understood the lives of rural Alabamians and were prepared to serve them.

When need for family doctors for rural areas became an issue in Alabama in the late 1960s, Dr. Rutland was an acknowledged leader in this field. Soon he was enlisted by the University of Alabama in the effort to establish a new medical

education program for that purpose. In 1969, UA President David Matthews involved him and Dr. John Burnum, a Tuscaloosa Internist, in planning and recruiting a dean to establish the College of Community Health Sciences (CCHS) and Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency at the University of Alabama. Dr. William R. Willard, who had recently retired as the dean of the University of Kentucky School of Medicine, was selected as founding dean of CCHS in 1971. Dr. Willard is credited for making the medical education program for students in their clinical years and the Family Medicine residency in Tuscaloosa a reality.

The academic specialty of Family Medicine was still very new at the time and there were few seasoned role models within medical school ranks. Dr. Willard convinced Dr. Rutland in 1972 to give up two days per week from his practice in Fayette to teach family practice residents. He served as the Director of the Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency from 1973-75. On the days that he was in Tuscaloosa, colleagues in Fayette, especially doctors Breitling and Hodo, provided coverage for his patients.

Dr. Rutland is widely recognized for his central role in getting CCHS off to a good start. In the history of the college, titled A Special Kind of Doctor, he is pictured prominently with other college fathers including President Mathews, Dr. John Burnum, and Dr. Bill Owings. It was extra work to help build a medical education program for family doctors, but he was also to gain from this labor.

Dr. Michael McBearty, the first doctor to complete the residency program in Tuscaloosa, was deeply affected by Dr. Rutland's leadership and, during his last year in residency, married Dr. Rutland's oldest daughter, Cindy. The couple provided Dr. and Mrs. Rutland with four grandchildren, including one who attended medical school at CCHS and took Family Medicine training in Colorado, following his grandfather's footsteps. Dr. Rutland has been privileged to see family doctors populating many of Alabama's rural communities as an outgrowth of his seminal work. Three of these Board Certified Family Physicians have taken residence to practice and raise families in Fayette-- Dr. Garry Magouirk, Dr. Fred Yerby, and Dr. Greg Stidham.



Dr. Rutland with A Special Kind of Doctor

Resuming his fulltime practice, Dr. Rutland was recognized as the model of a true family doctor. He provided healthcare services to his patients from cradle to grave. In the later years of his practice, he transitioned into long term care practice focusing on nursing home patients. During that time he was a facilitator, motivator, defender, and outstanding champion for long term care (LTC). Under his guidance, the Fayette Nursing Home consistently received excellent ratings from the State Department of Public Health and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Facilities. The nursing staff, medical staff and administration greatly appreciated his consistent leadership. Dr. Rutland retired in August 2008 after 54 years of dedicated service. But even in retirement, he has remained active by keeping up with current events, being an active member of the Fayette Area Chamber of Commerce, consulting with CCHS, and staying involved with the community and his church.

Dr. Rutland and Nancy have played an important role in the community, their church, and in local school affairs. In 1960 they were voted “Man and Woman of the Year.” In 2012 they were inducted into the Fayette County Athletic Hall of Fame because Mrs. Rutland had done so much work teaching swimming lessons at the city pool and the Beville State Community College. Dr. Rutland had coached a diving team and had worked with the Fayette and Hubbertville football teams as the team doctor and in developing new team policies regarding to athletic physicals. Dr. Rutland was a trustee at the Fayette County High School for several years. He was active also in the First United Methodist Church and held several

positions there. He is best known, however, for his compassionate care of his patients and being a loving family community doctor.

Dr. Rutland won the affection of his community and the state as one of their beloved family physicians. He has been recognized widely for his exemplary service in this role. In 1981, he was named the Alabama Family Doctor of the Year and was chosen by *Good Housekeeping* and the American Academy of Family Physicians as the 1981 Family Doctor of the Year. The latter award was presented to him in the office of Dr. Edward N. Brandt, Assistant Secretary for Health of the United States Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D. C. on August 7, 1981. Other recognition included:

- The Rural Health Provider Exceptional Achievement Award in 2003, from the Alabama Rural Health Association,
- The Rural Medical Scholars Program Sage Award in 2005, from the University of Alabama Rural Medical Scholars Program for contributions to the development of rural medical education in Alabama, and
- The Paul W. Burleson Award in 2006, from the Medical Association of the State of Alabama "in recognition of a medical career that encompasses not only high ethical and professional standards in patient care, but includes extraordinary service to physician organizations at the county, state and national levels."

A man of courage and conviction, Richard O. Rutland, Jr., MD, is widely respected and loved and has contributed to the betterment of health care for people in Fayette, Alabama, and the country.