

STOKES: This is Ray Stokes in the Oral History Section of the Health Sciences Library of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine on February 23, 1989. It's a distinct privilege on my part today to welcome and recognize Dr. Catherine Kenny Carlton who is a pioneer D.O. in the Fort Worth area. Dr. Catherine (I'm going to call you Dr. Catherine), it's a pleasure to have you here with us today and we want to find out all about the pioneer family that you represent and I think your mother and father were D.O.s so tell us a little bit about your biography so to speak; where were you born and all your childhood experiences.

CARLTON: Well, my parents first practiced in Laredo, Texas on the Mexican border so naturally my sister and I spoke Spanish before we did English. That was our first language and till today we still speak Spanish. They were in Laredo during the time of the raids of Poncho Villa and my mother had a horse and buggy and she'd go out and make housecalls and they'd say "Dr. Helen, aren't you afraid you'll get shot by one of Poncho Villa's men?"

STOKES: Can I interrupt and ask, did you ever see Poncho Villa?

CARLTON: Not that I remember. But she went right on. She was a woman of great courage. So then they decided that they were going to move out of Laredo and my father visited Houston and San Antonio and Dallas, but he chose Fort Worth because he liked it. So we came here in 1920. There were only three other D.O.s here then: Dr. Ray, Dr. Walker, and Dr. Maude Russell.

STOKES: Is that Dr. Phil Russell's mother?

CARLTON: Yes, Dr. Phil Russell's mother. So, in 1920 my parents invited these three D.O.s to their home and one evening they sat in the living room and formed the Tarrant County Association of Osteopathic Physicians. It is now called District 2, but that was in 1920. Well, they practiced in the W. T. Wagner building until the bottom of the depression and then they had to move to their home, but it was the greatest blessing ever, because it was after that that there was a great migration to the near southside where it has become the medical center and about 85% of all the physicians in the city are practicing within an 11 mile radius. So, I'm right there. I've been in that corner and practiced there for 50 years.

STOKES: Now where is that, exactly?

CARLTON: 815 West Magnolia. It's the same place I grew up. In 1953 we moved the old home place and my first husband, Elbert Carlton, and I had the office built there and that's where we practiced. He and I practiced together for 20 years until his death in 1972. Since then I have been practicing alone.

STOKES: What certifications do you have in your practice?

CARLTON: Well, I'm certified in general practice and also certified by the American Academy of Osteopathy, so I have a good general practice, but mostly my work is a manipulative type of practice and because I can talk Spanish I get many who cannot speak English.

STOKES: You know it's amazing. Today it seems like that a doctor, once he goes into practice, in the first five years he's moved three

times and it's amazing that you've been in the same location for 50 years. I kind of grew up on the southside of Fort Worth myself, so you relate to the old Taylor Ice Cream Parlor and the Tively and the Rochefeller hamburger stand across the street from you.

CARLTON: That right. We went to the Tively for a dime.

STOKES: Right, for a dime. Tell me, Dr. Catherine, you've had a great interest in the development of TCOM. When did you first become involved with the founders of TCOM? I know you're going to give me their names, and what was your role in the development of the school.

CARLTON: Well, in 1969 Dr. Luibel spoke to me and told me that they were going to establish an osteopathic college here in Fort Worth. It was going to be the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine and would I like to teach? I said "I'll be glad to." Of course he said there would be no money, but that was alright. And we all contributed to it because we had a dream. And so the classes began and you were at the very first and Dr. Hart and Elizabeth Harris, Dr. Shunder, and there were a few of us. We all had the dream and then these 17 freshman students came in.

STOKES: Just for the record, it was 20 who came and 18 who finished. We had 17 males and one female, maybe that's where you got the 17.

CARLTON: That's it. But they were remarkable young people. They had the dream when we had the dream. So for five years I was head of the Department of Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine.

STOKES: It has had several names, hasn't it?

CARLTON: Yes, that's right. Of course I didn't know how to teach. I had been in practice, but Dr. Ira Rumney from Kirksville told me what to do and sent me their books and so I started with that. Well after I had been there about five years Dr. Marion Coy, who was then president, called me in and asked me if I wanted to give up my private practice and go with the college fulltime. Well I thought about it and prayed over it and prayed over it and I turned it down. I said I had been in private practice too long to just go into a college and give up my private practice. So, I turned it down and since then I have been what they call a clinical professor, I come in when they call me.

STOKES: You had a terrific career and you've been very involved not only in your profession but you are also involved in your church.

CARLTON: Very much so.

STOKES: Well, give us some of your involvement.

CARLTON: Well, I'm a Catholic. I go to St. Mary's Catholic Church and I've been on their parish counsel most of the time since it was formed in 1968 and they have given me awards and we had a little school there, a little parochial school, and I was president of the school board the first few years. I've worked with my church so long and my religion means an awful lot to me and I have been fortunate in that I was in the Zonna Club, I was president of that and I have worked with the Edna Gladney Home, the young girls there. I got an award for taking them to mass for ten years. But I think the finest award I have received, of course, was the Founder's Medal from the college in 1983 and then the Knights of Columbus gave me a humanitarian award because of my care for

the poor little Mexicans. I have great compassion for them because I speak their language and because they're humble and so appreciative and whatever you do for them they seem so grateful. That's part of the reason I got the award.

STOKES: What other awards have you been given? I know you have got a long list and you are modest, but forget your modesty and list some of these citations.

CARLTON: Well, in 1985 the Business Professional Women's Club gave me the Businesswoman of the Year Award, locally, and then I got a meritorious award from TCOM in 1976 and Outstanding Professional Woman in the Designer Club in about 1980. I am fortunate, I am the luckiest person I know.

STOKES: I know that you've had two marriages. Tell me a little bit about your marriage with Dr. Elbert and then your marriage with your current husband.

CARLTON: Well, Elbert and I were married for twenty years and we adopted three daughters and we've educated them and now we have seven grandchildren. He died of a rare blood disease in 1972 and so in 1974 I married a fine old friend who had lost his wife, and that was Gene Hightower. He was first a teacher, then a principal then the business manager for the schools in the Fort Worth Independent School District. We have been married now for fourteen years and I have been very fortunate, I have had two fine men.

STOKES: One reason that I know you and feel so close to you is that I was fairly close to Elbert and very close to Gene, I've known him for

many years.

CARLTON: Now, I was going to tell you how many D.O.'s are in our family.

STOKES: That's what I was getting ready to ask you.

CARLTON: Well sir, we have won an award, hands down, in the profession for the number of D.O.'s in the same family. We have nineteen blood relations that are and have been D.O.'s and if we count Dr. George Lubal, who is a cousin by marriage, that will make twenty.

STOKES: Dr. George Lubal, who is he?

CARLTON: Well now, he is married to my cousin Mary and of course he was the brainchild that established this college. Then I have a great-niece in England who has registered to enter the Osteopathic College in London next September, so if she goes through, that will make twenty-one. And my mother and father were instrumental in getting all of them to go.

STOKES: Well, do you know if that is some kind of record, have you done any checking?

CARLTON: Oh yes, in the profession they have had contests, and I have won hands down twice.

STOKES: Well, do you hold the record for being in the same location for fifty years?

CARLTON: I've never heard of a contest for such a thing, but I bet I would. I bet there are not many who have.

STOKES: I bet there's not a half a dozen in the country who haven't moved at least once.

CARLTON: I want to say something about my mother. When my sister went to England, England was about to go to war. Her husband was an Englishman. She (my mother) told her, "Now Emily, remember, you come from a family of courageous women, don't make us ashamed of you." And so all during World War II, while Emily was there, her husband was in the service and she had to work fire patrol at night. She said she'd square her shoulders and she'd say, "They're not going to be ashamed of this Texan." Her mother gave her all that courage instead of telling her, "Now do be careful, you're going into a war, be careful." That wasn't my mother, she was a woman of courage.

STOKES: She was down on the border for a long time.

CARLTON: She was a courageous woman, very courageous.

STOKES: Now tell me, in your teaching experience here at TCOM can you recall some highlight, some very memorable experience that you had, particularly in your first year here? You had your first twenty students and you were teaching them two or three times a week or whatever your schedule was. Isn't there something outstanding that's most memorable that you had occur or experienced?

CARLTON: Well, I can remember the first time I met the class.

STOKES: Where were they meeting at that time?

CARLTON: We were meeting upstairs on the fifth floor of the hospital. Dr. Virginia Ellis had given them the history of Osteopathy and I faced this class, and there was the librarian and here were the students, some of them with tape recorders. I was petrified, but here they were, nice young people. I became very fond of them, but I was especially impressed with the young lady, the only girl in the class, Nelda Cuniff. Here she was, the courageous young, little thing that came into class. Well sir, you know that the D.O.'s all around this area used to all come in and teach, and it was such a thrill to call them and say, "Will you come in and teach for us next Thursday", and they'd say they'd be glad to. And they'd come from all over; Dr. Granger from Tyler.

STOKES: Do you remember Jack's name from down in San Angelo?

CARLTON: Wilhelm. Yeah, they'd take the day or two off and come in and teach for free. None of us got anything. Not only that, we helped contribute to the support of the college. So they were great days and they were fine students and I am still very fond of them. And if you'd like, I thought I'd give you a little bit of the history of women in medicine.

STOKES: Yes, I was going to note that you said you were chairman of what is now Manipulative Medicine. I think the catalog also has you listed as chairman of the history of medicine. So give us a little history of the medicine that you're familiar with.

CARLTON: Well, the most interesting thing is that the first medical



school in the United States was formed ten years before the Revolutionary War, that would be the year 1765 and it was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, so that's the prestigious medical school. But they wouldn't accept women until this century. The first woman in the United States that became a physician was Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell and she received her diploma from the Geneva Medical School in New York in 1849, the year of the gold rush. So then she went to New York and there wasn't a hospital that would have her, she couldn't go in any hospital and practice. She couldn't do any post-graduate work, so she went to Paris and Paris wouldn't have her, so she went to London. London gave her some recognition and she was a great friend of Florence Nightengale. Eventually she came back and then her sister followed her and they established a clinic for women and children. Now we'll jump until the 1980 census, this is 140 years later. There are 15,000 women physicians in the United States in the 1980 census and most of these women are associated with colleges, with clinics, or on staffs of hospitals, very few of them are in private practice. I am one of them.

STOKES: Dr. Catherine, you've had a very enviable career, and life as well, and I know that there is bound to be something that is outstanding that you feel that you had a finger in the hand. I guess you feel that way about TCOM, as far as that's concerned, but is there anything else that you feel that you helped get off the ground.

CARLTON: Well, I've encouraged a lot of students to enter the Osteopathic colleges, lots of them, and I've recommended them. Some have gone to Kirksville and some have come here. I see them every once in awhile and I feel like they're my children.

STOKES: Speaking of Kirksville, you reminded me of something. I had

the pleasure of hearing you last October 14th, I believe it was, at your Founder's Day out in the cemetery where Dr. Stell is buried. Give us a little bit about the Founder's Day involvement that you have every year. At that time you were the president of the alumni association.

CARLTON: Past; past president.

STOKES: Oh, I thought you were the president at that given time.

CARLTON: No, I was past president. But, at that time they were honoring the class of 1938.

STOKES: That's what it was, and you were president of that class.

CARLTON: So of that class, there were over 100 of us, there were 19 that showed up to our reunion and I was the only one of the females. There were five females in our class of over 100, but I was the only one that showed up at the reunion. And it was so good to see them again. But you know, out of that group, there are only two that are still in private practice full time. Dr. Bud Mosier who is in Arizona, and then I am here and the rest of them are either part time or they're associated with this or they're retired or this-that-and-the-other. But we got to plant a wreath at the grave of Dr. A.T. Stell and in '92 or '3 it is, I believe, they are going to celebrate 100 years since the founding of the first Osteopathic college. Speaking of courage, my mother was one of the early ones to go there. I think she must have entered about 1906 or '07, something like that.

STOKES: Well now, you're father was president of TOMA back in 1927, '28. In other words, he would have been the twenty-eighth president of

the association.

CARLTON: They were both quite active, they tried so hard to help the profession, they encouraged students and this-that-and-the-other. When they were first planning this hospital, I must tell you my father was then already deceased, but my mother said, "I'll never live to see the Osteopathic college here, but you will and it will be a gift to the community and so we've put \$1000 in escrow." Well \$1000 was a lot of money, we could've put it many places, but we did that and we were really careful, we didn't take any trips, we just worked.

STOKES: You know you are one of those who was honored. You know, there's a plaque on the eighth floor of the administration building, we call it Med Ed I, as you get off the elevator, it says "TCOM Sustainers." Your name is one of those sustainers. You haven't seen it? It's been up there for some time. I had it in my custody here for a long time, but I finally conveyed upon them to mount it over where people could see it. Dr. Catherine, after, as I said a moment ago, a very enviable career that you've had, and justifiably so - we all want to make some contribution in life, some of us maybe more than one, and you've made several - but, what would you best like to be remembered for?

CARLTON: Will Rogers once said something that I think is worthwhile. He said, "To be a success, first you must know what you're doing, second, you must believe in what you're doing, and third, you must love what you're doing so much that you'd do it for free." And I have, and I've been very fortunate.

STOKES: Well, it's been a pleasure to have you with us today, Dr.

Catherine, and you've made my day, as the expression goes, I appreciate it very much.

CARLTON: Thank you.

STOKES: This is Ray Stokes.