

## Carl Glennis Roberts, M.D., 1886-1950

CARL G. ROBERTS died on Sunday, January 15, 1950 after a gallant fight for nearly nine years to win back full strength and health following a debilitating attack of coronary thrombosis in 1941.

Dr. Roberts was born at Roberts' Settlement, Hamilton County, Indiana on December 15, 1886.

He finished High School in Fairmount, Indiana in 1905 and the next year, began his studies in medicine at the Chicago College of Medicine and Surgery, from which he graduated in 1911. From the time of his graduation to the time of his death, he was one of the most potent forces for progressive medicine in the Chicago area. Throughout his long career, he was continuously attempting to improve his own knowledge. While externing at the German-American Hos-

pital soon after graduation, he did graduate studies at the Illinois Post-Graduate School of Therapeutics. Later, in 1919 he took a course in surgery at the Chicago Laboratory of Surgical Technique; and attended the courses at the Chicago Institute of Surgery in 1921; the Illinois Post-Graduate School of Operative Surgery, 1921-22; the University of Chicago Medical School, 1930-33; and the Cook County Hospital Graduate School, Laboratory of Surgical Pathology, 1933-34.

Though he spent all of his active life as a surgeon in Chicago, his interests were widespread—this interest being broadened by travel abroad in England, Scotland, Holland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and France.

From 1911 until 1928, he was a member of the attending staff of the Chicago General Hospital and had courtesy privileges in several other hospitals; but his greatest contribution was made at the Provident Hospital with which he was associated continuously from 1912. In 1916 at the request of the late Dr. George C. Hall, then Chief Surgeon of the Hospital, Roberts was assigned

the responsibility of planning and supervising the reorganization of the staff. He became the Chairman of the Department of Gynecology in 1918 and served until 1923 in this capacity. As Chairman of the Department of Surgery in 1935, he was largely responsible for the planning and institution of the five-year plan for graduate training in surgery under the supervision of the University of Chicago. This plan was the first in any Negro institution to receive the official recognition and approval of the American College of Surgeons and the American Medical Association. Throughout the years when he was bedridden, Roberts' interest in training young surgeons never waned.

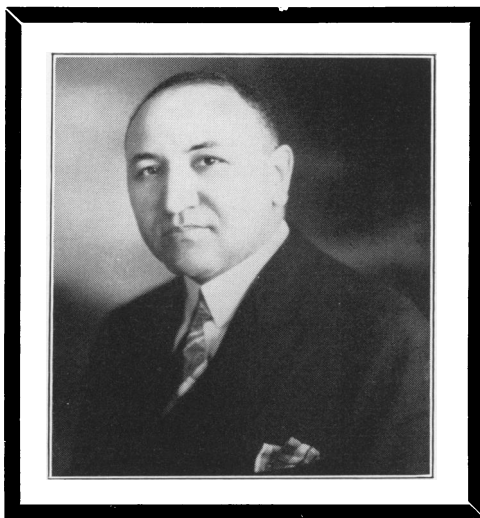
His medical interests were not limited to Chicago. He was a member of the Board of Trustees for the N.M.A. for eight years and served

as its President in 1925. In 1947, he was elected to give the Surgical Oration at the N.M.A. Convention in New York, though he had not actively practiced surgery since 1941.

He was one of the first Negroes to be certified by the American Board of Surgery. He was a Fellow of both the American College of Surgeons and the International College of Surgeons. Recitation of these accomplishments does not portray the years of bitter fighting in association with his colleagues in Chicago and elsewhere to make it possible for Negroes to become recognized as acceptable parts of American medicine.

With equal vigor and ability, he threw himself into community activities of Chicago—including the Y.M.C.A., the various inter-racial movements, the Urban League, the Citizen's Civic and Economic Welfare Council, the N.A.A.C.P., the Chicago South Central Community Council and the church.

It was, perhaps, inevitable that something should give way under this tremendous load. In 1941 when he was put to bed, one would have thought



that his activities would have ceased—this was not so. Even in bed, he was a constant source of wise counsel, a dynamic and commanding figure. His judgments were sought after not only locally,

but over a wide area. Provident Hospital, the city of Chicago, the N.M.A. have lost a true leader; the Nation has lost one of its finest surgeons.

CHARLES R. DREW, M.D.

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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I visited the scientific sessions of the American Medical Association here in Washington in December and much to my embarrassment I saw very few of the Negro members of the American Medical Association. It is regrettable that the Negro members of this group fail completely to realize what an excellent job they can do in race relations by their large attendance at these scientific meetings. In Washington, of all places, every Negro in the United States who has a membership card of the American Medical Association should have been present. The District Medical Society membership would have had a splendid opportunity to see there would have been no atomic explosion because Negro and White physicians intermingled on a basis of professional equality. I hope that this short message will create a different type of thinking among those of us who also belong to the American Medical Association.

All State societies are requested to discuss the Truman Health Program fully and direct their delegates on the way they should vote on this proposition at the meeting in August. You are respectfully urged to elect your delegates early and send the names to the Speaker of the House in order to facilitate his selections of members to the many committees he must appoint. This would be of great assistance in helping to expedite affairs of the House of Delegates.

I am happy to announce that complete health and accident insurance coverage will soon be available to the members of the National Medical Association at the lowest premium ever offered under the group plan. The company is one of the strongest in the United States and has as its insurees some of the largest national organiza-

tions in America. I am positive that your present health and accident insurance cannot match this proposition in any way. You will soon receive application blanks which I hope you will give your immediate attention in order that the plan might succeed.

### *Tentative Commitments of the President*

Board of Trustees Meeting—Atlantic City—February 26  
 Cook County Medical Society—Chicago—March 17  
 Tuskegee Clinics—April 2 through 7  
 Palmetto Medical Society—Columbia, S. C.—April 25 through 28  
 Lakin Hospital—Lakin, West Virginia—May 12  
 Old North State Medical Society—High Point, N. C.—June 6 through 8

C. HERBERT MARSHALL, M.D.

### TELEGRAM

Mrs. Carl Glennis Roberts  
 420 East 50th Street  
 Chicago, Illinois

January 16, 1950

The entire membership of the National Medical Association is saddened by the news of the passing of your husband, DR. CARL GLENNIS ROBERTS, our former president. He is one of the National Medical Association's immortals; throughout the years of his confinement his spirit was a motivating force in the life of the Association. For the entire Association I wish to extend our profoundest sympathy and our hope that you will find great pleasure in the years to come because you have known as we have known a great character.

C. HERBERT MARSHALL, M.D., *President*  
 National Medical Association

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"Medicine needs a supposition at every step, and cannot advance without the support of theory, but when the theory controls medicine it is like a crutch walking alone. The plethora of facts discovered in the seventeenth century, bewildered the profession, and appeased its hunger for research—there is a pause in experimentation as the eighteenth century begins to weave hypotheses with the accumulated material. Medicine becomes largely metaphysical, and we watch the rise and fall of medico-philosophical systems. Ink-wells were very busy, and committed much mischief. Classifiers led the profession, and produced tons of literature which have long been waste-paper. In the eighteenth century, the most casual observation, or no observation at all, was sufficient for the creation of a theory which included the entire medical art."—From *Victor Robinson*, "The Story of Medicine."