

Emma Plank (in) the City Hospital in Cleveland

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EMMA PLANK

Ten years after retiring and three years since in an impressive playground for children hospitalized here was dedicated in her name, Emma Plank looks to the future with the same gusto and gutsiness that characterized her illustrious 17-year career with Cleveland Metropolitan General Hospital.

A charming woman, Plank joined City Hospital — Metro General's forerunner — in 1955 to start the first formal, university-affiliated child life and education program in the United States. As an assistant professor of child development with Western Reserve University (WRU), Plank worked closely with the Department of Pediatrics and its director, Dr. Frederick Robbins.

It was Dr. Robbins, who later became dean of the WRU Medical School, who persuaded Plank to expand her talents at City Hospital by organizing a program in which her graduate students could work closely with 15 pre-school tuberculosis patients. In essence, a nursery school was set up for these youngsters.

"Dr. Robbins felt it was inhuman to keep children in the hospital month after month without providing them with something to do," Plank recalled. Thanks to a two-year, \$15,000 grant from the Cleveland Foundation in the spring of 1955, young TB patients were soon being furnished with the special care that most medical personnel do not have the time to provide. By summer, the educating, interacting, playing — the healing-by-loving — being offered by Plank, schoolteacher Wilma Rice and the other child life staff members were being spread to the children with polio and respiratory difficulties.

Child life and education, now a profession recognized nationwide, had begun.



Above, Emma Plank works with a child as part of a babysitting service formerly provided in the Playcorner. Below, 10 years later, Plank ponders a question about her future.

Born 76 years ago in Vienna, Austria, Emma Plank received much of her formal training under the famed Italian educator and physician, Maria Montessori. Plank taught in a Montessori elementary school in Vienna and participated in an international Montessori training course in Berlin, Germany, before emigrating to the United States with her husband in 1938. She also studied under Anna Freud.

"Dr. Montessori gave a whole new perspective on the way children learn," Plank noted. "She saw the hopelessness of deprived children and felt something could be done to help them." In 1906, something was done when Montessori opened the world's first nursery school deep in the slums of Rome, Italy.

As a result of her extensive work with Montessori, Plank found herself developing a "great deal of interest in the spontaneity of a child's learning." It was this invaluable experience that would guide her as she obtained her master's degree in child development from California's Mills College in 1947 and then,

for 17 years Emma Plank was a mother and grandmother to thousands of young children

three years later, when she joined Western Reserve as an assistant professor.

When Plank came to City Hospital in 1955 she, too, witnessed the "hopelessness" in many underprivileged, sick and often dying children. She stressed the importance of the child life specialist as a person who is available to help young patients adapt to the hospital environment and adjust to their diseases or medical problems.

In her 1971 book, *Working With Children In Hospitals*, a publication which has helped guide the rapidly expanding child life profession, Plank explains that when a child is hospitalized the hospital has to "take on tasks beyond its healing function, tasks which must be accomplished so the rhythm of life and growth can go on."

Plank points out that there are certain inherent characteristics common to all pediatric patients: grief at separation from home, anxiety about mutilation of one's body by surgery, submission to



Plank and "Abbey" relax in their Cleveland Heights Home.

immobility and many other adjustments that the child must make to illness and the hospital regimen.

"We have learned to substitute knowledge and comprehension for fear of the unknown and the misunderstood," she writes. "We have asked ourselves how we can best serve the child who is about to enter the hospital; what we can do for him when he is there; and how to help him return to normal living."

Today, Cleveland Metropolitan General/Highland View Hospital's Child Life and Education Department maintains the basic philosophy established by Emma Plank.

"Our staff is dedicated to viewing the hospital from the child's point view," said Director Joanne Ross. "We look for the best way to let each child express what is happening to him or her here at the hospital.

"By using play as an expressive, creative outlet we can structure activities which will allow any child to express himself, Ross added. "But in addition to this useful tool there are concepts Plank developed, such as preparing the child mentally for surgery and observing and

assessing children's behavior in a "normal" playroom setting, which we are using successfully."

"(Plank) took play, which was available in many hospitals, and expanded it to use it in a supportive and therapeutic program for children," Ross said. "She's a marvelous woman and an inspiration for us all."

In August 1979, the Cuyahoga County Hospital System Board of Trustees honored Plank by designating the hospital's Outdoor Environmental Center as the "Emma Plank Playground." In an unanimously-adopted resolution, the Board paid tribute to her "distinguished contribution to Cleveland Metropolitan General Hospital, its Child Life and Education Department and the field of child care in hospitals internationally."

The \$50,000 multi-level environmental center is a playground that emphasizes therapeutic recreation which stimulates and provokes a child's senses while he's having fun. It includes a special, extra-wide slide for the handicapped youngster, a foam mattress on which disabled patients can experience

freedom of movement, and a movable, height-adjustable basketball hoop.

Ten years after retiring, Plank, adorned in a red blazer, her Austrian accent still discernible, sits comfortably in her tidy, bright Cleveland Heights home talking about her plans for the future.

She has lectured extensively over the past decade, traveling abroad and to a number of universities throughout the United States. Last September she visited West Germany and spoke at the University of Freiburg. She still works as a consultant with a group of German pediatricians.

Plank also will continue to write. Her articles have appeared in numerous periodicals and books, published throughout the U.S. and Europe. Her last piece was featured in a 1981 publication, *Children and Our Future*.

Ironically, Plank and her husband of 50 years, Robert, have no children — at least none of their own. But for 17 years Emma Plank was like a mother, grandmother and more to thousands of young children — the Metropolitan General patients who were fortunate to receive the loving care she provided.

DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES
AT CITY HOSPITAL OF CLEVELAND

The Department of Pediatrics and Contagious Diseases at City Hospital has always been closely associated with the School of Medicine, Western Reserve University. In an agreement with the City of Cleveland in 1918, The University accepted the responsibility for the professional activities at the hospital. Among those who contributed greatly to the early development of the department at City Hospital were Dr. O.L. Goehle, Dr. C.W. Burhans, '15, the late Dr. H.O. Ruh, '10, the late Dr. Frederick Beekel, Dr. L.R. Brigman, '14, Dr. J.H. Davis, '18, Dr. J.I. Hartman, '23, the late Dr. C.F. Good, '27, and Dr. R.B. Hauver, '22. When Dr. Henry Gerstenberger, '03, was appointed professor of pediatrics he also became chief of service at City Hospital. He showed great interest in the service and contributed very valuable support.

No discussion of the Department of Pediatrics and Contagious Diseases at City Hospital would be satisfactory without considerable emphasis upon the contributions of Dr. John A. Toomey, '19, and Dr. J.D. Pilcher, '05. Dr. Toomey, the first full-time person in the department, became director of the Division of Contagious Diseases at City Hospital in 1922. The outstanding contributions that he made need hardly be repeated here. Suffice it to say that he became an international authority on infectious diseases of children; probably his best known contributions were his studies on the epidemiology and pathogenesis of poliomyelitis, and the early treatment of patients ill with that disease. He was made professor of clinical pediatrics and contagious diseases in 1940. Dr. Pilcher came

to City Hospital in 1930 and assumed the responsibility for the pediatric ward and for the teaching of pediatrics in the hospital. He became associate professor of pediatrics in 1933. Following retirement from his post at City Hospital in 1950 he assumed the direction of the East Thirty-Fifth Street Clinic. He continued in this capacity until his death in 1954.

Dr. Toomey died in 1950, having been active in the department for 28 years. Dr. Morris Schaeffer, his assistant from September, 1945, to November, 1948, participated in the clinical teaching and research programs of the department. Following the death of Dr. Toomey and the resignation of Dr. Pilcher (July, 1950), Dr. Robert M. Eiben, '46, assumed responsibility for both the Contagious Disease and Pediatric Divisions. About this time, a program of development at City Hospital had been agreed upon by the city administration. This included capital improvements at the hospital as well as expansion of the full time staff with the appointment of full time heads of departments of professorial rank. Dr. Frederick C. Robbins was appointed Chief of the Department of Pediatrics and Contagious Diseases at City Hospital, and Professor of Pediatrics on the faculty of Western Reserve University in 1952. During the interim period from 1950 to 1952, Dr. Eiben had carried the entire burden of the department with the loyal assistance of Doctors J.H. Davis, '18, Joseph C. Jenkins, '47, Harold Epstein, and Francis F. Silver, '38.

The present department consists of three major divisions--the contagious disease division in Toomey Pavilion, the pediatric wards in the Hamann

Pavilion, and the East Thirty-Fifth Street Clinic. The pediatric division consists of two wards with approximately 65 general pediatric beds. In addition, a 20-bed premature nursery is housed on the same floor. Needless to say, there has been a great change in the type of patient seen in the Contagious Disease Division in recent years. The division includes one ward for acutely ill patients, most of whom have poliomyelitis, meningitis, infectious diarrhea, or complications of the various contagious diseases. No longer are large numbers of patients with infections such as diphtheria, scarlet fever, measles, and chickenpox admitted to the hospital. One floor in Toomey Pavilion is now devoted to the Respirator Care and Rehabilitation Center under the direction of Dr. Eiben. This unit has a capacity of approximately 20 patients, all of whom are seriously involved poliomyelitis patients with impairment of breathing. An official respirator center of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis for two years, this is one of 15 in the country, all of which receive considerable support from the foundation. The emphasis is upon rehabilitation of these patients to the point where they can return to their homes and, where possible, engage in constructive activities. Facilities for physical therapy, occupational therapy, the design and construction of adaptive equipment, social service, vocational counseling, group therapy and schooling have all been introduced into the program of the center. In addition to the 20 patients within the hospital, the staff of the center is now caring for approximately 60 patients in northern Ohio on an out-patient basis. Most of the patients cared for here come from the northern Ohio area, although some come from greater distances.

Another recent development in the contagious disease unit is the unit for the care of young children ill with tuberculosis, established approximately two years ago. This was de-

veloped as a joint project of the City and Cuyahoga County and is designed to give long-term care to children under 5 years of age convalescing from tuberculosis. The capacity of this unit is approximately 16, and emphasis is upon reproducing as nearly as possible home conditions in the hospital. The program is more nearly that of a nursery school than of a hospital ward.

An unusual aspect of the Department of Pediatrics and Contagious Diseases at City Hospital is the program for child care and education, which was also developed approximately two years ago. This is headed by Mrs. Emma K. Plank, assistant professor of child development in the Department of Pediatrics. At present, it is supported by a grant from the Cleveland Foundation. In addition to Mrs. Plank, her staff includes a full-time grade school teacher, a nursery school teacher and three Antioch College students who each spend three months working in the program as part of their regular college curriculum. This group arranges for the education of children in the respirator center, the tuberculosis unit and the pediatric ward. They also supervise and in part staff the play room on the pediatric ward, and assist in coordinating the various programs designed for education and recreation of all children in the hospital.

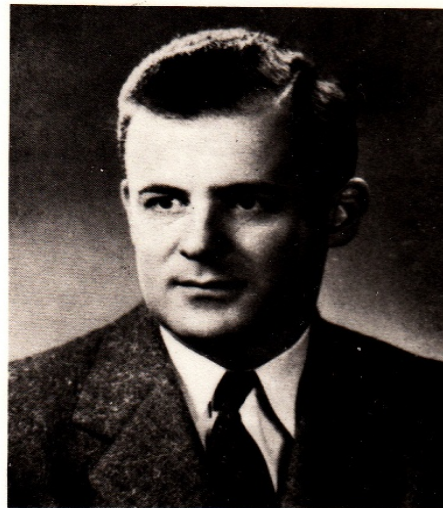
Although pediatric out-patient clinics are conducted at City Hospital twice weekly, the major pediatric out-patient service of the department is at the East Thirty-Fifth Street Clinic. When the Babies and Childrens Hospital moved to its present site near the School of Medicine, the City assumed responsibility for this clinic. It meets five days a week and treats more than 20,000 children each year. Dr. Clifton B. Turner, '52, has recently assumed responsibility for the medical supervision of the clinic. Pediatric residents and many practicing pediatricians provide patient care in this unit.

The full time staff of the Department of Pediatrics and Contagious

Diseases at City Hospital consists of Dr. Robbins, Chief; Dr. Eiben, Assistant Professor; Dr. E.A. Mortimer, Jr., Assistant Professor; Dr. Eli Gold, '50, Senior Instructor; Dr. Willard C. Schmidt, Assistant Professor; and Mrs. Emma Plank, Assistant Professor of Child Development. Dr. Turner, Demonstrator, contributes half time to the department and Dr. Edward J. Schiff, Instructor in Child Psychiatry, serves as psychiatric consultant. In addition, Dr. Martha J. Lipson, '52, Dr. Juan Rivadeneira, Dr. Reich L. Watterson, Jr., '52, and Dr. David Carver, research fellows in the department, contribute greatly to the program. With the opening of new laboratory facilities at City Hospital in 1955, research activities have been considerably facilitated and programs in areas of virus diseases, rheumatic fever, and hematology are being actively pursued.

The department participates actively in the pediatric teaching program of the University in various ways. A basic clerkship and also an elective in pediatrics and contagious diseases are offered. Since 1951 the department has been recognized for residency training in pediatrics and now has a resident staff of 12, including five second year residents and two chief (or third year) residents. At the second year level the residents are jointly appointed with Babies and Childrens Hospital and spend six months in each institution.

Dr. Frederick C. Robbins became professor of pediatrics and director of the Department of Pediatrics and Contagious Diseases at City Hospital in 1952. He received his AB degree from the University of Missouri in 1936 and his MD degree from Harvard University in 1940. After graduation from medical school he trained at the Children's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. This training was interrupted by four years of service in the United States Army, during which time he served in the Mediterranean Theater and was discharged as a major. He was awarded the Bronze Star for distinguished service.



DR. ROBBINS

From 1948 to 1950 he held a senior fellowship in virus diseases of the National Research Council and worked with Dr. John F. Enders at the Children's Hospital, Boston. At the time he left Boston he was associate in pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and associate physician at the Children's Hospital.

While he was at Harvard, he, together with Dr. Enders and Dr. Thomas H. Weller, worked on the development of tissue culture techniques in poliomyelitis viruses, and it was for this accomplishment they were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in December, 1954. Dr. Robbins has the distinction of being the first and only member of the faculty to hold the honor of Nobel Laureate.

In 1955 he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Science from John Carroll University. He is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics and serves on its Committee on the Control of Infectious Diseases; he is a member of the Society for Pediatric Research and its Council, American Association of Immunologists, American Society for Clinical Investigation, Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, The New York Academy of Sciences, Pediatric Travel Club, Phi

Gamma Delta, Society of Sigma Xi and Phi Beta Kappa.

He serves as associate member on the Commission on Viral Infections of the Armed Forces Epidemiological Board, Department of Defense; as consultant to the staff of the Communicable Disease Center, United States Public Health Service, Atlanta; as a member of the Committee on Medical Education, Western Reserve University School of Medicine, and is on the National Council on Infant and Child Care. His principal research work concerns poliomyelitis and other viral diseases.

Dr. Robert M. Eiben, assistant professor of pediatrics and assistant director, Department of Pediatrics and Contagious Diseases (in charge of Contagious Diseases), is a native Clevelander and a graduate of Western Reserve University's Adelbert College and its School of Medicine (1946). His clinical training in medicine and pediatrics was obtained at University Hospitals and City Hospital.



DR. EIBEN

As medical director of the Poliomyelitis Respiratory Care Center at City Hospital, Dr. Eiben's investigational interests involve the many problems associated with the severely disabled poliomyelitis patients, particularly in regard to the medical management of those patients with impaired respiratory ability.

Dr. Edward A. Mortimer, Jr., assistant professor of Pediatrics and assistant director, Department of Pediatrics and Contagious Diseases (in charge of pediatrics), was born in Chicago, received his premedical education and two years of medical school at Dartmouth College and completed his medical training at Northwestern University School of Medicine in 1946. He spent 2 years in



DR. MORTIMER

the Navy and most of his clinical training was obtained at the Children's Medical Center, Boston. He came to Cleveland in August of 1952 and has done significant work in recognizing the services at the East Thirty-Fifth Street Clinic and the pediatric clinic at City Hospital. His special investigational studies are in heart disease and rheumatic fever in children.

Mrs. Emma K. Plank, assistant professor of child development in the Department of Pediatrics, School of Medicine, Western Reserve University, had her training as teacher of young children in her native Vienna and studied under Maria Montessori and Anna Freud. Her master's degree in child development is from Mills



MRS. PLANK

College, California. She has had experience in teaching children from nursery school through elementary grades, as a school administrator, in parent education, and in training of teachers. At present she is director of the program of child life and education at City Hospital.

Dr. Willard C. Schmidt, assistant professor of pediatrics and of preventive medicine, attended Cornell and the University of Rochester, where he received his AB degree in 1941 and his MD in 1944. He began his clinical training as an intern in pediatrics at Strong Memorial Hospital, Rochester, New York. After nine months he was called to active duty as a naval reserve officer. A year later he continued his training at Strong Memorial



DR. SCHMIDT

Hospital, Cornell University and Syracuse University College of Medicine. From 1948 to 1950 he was a USPHS post-doctorate research fellow in bacteriology and immunology at Harvard Medical School, and instructor in the same department at Harvard from July, 1950 to April, 1953. At this time he was again called to active duty. He began his affiliation with Western Reserve University School of Medicine in October, 1954, as assistant professor in preventive medicine at the Streptococcal Disease Laboratory, Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming. He came to City Hospital of Cleveland in September, 1955, as assistant professor in pediatrics and preventive medicine. His primary concern is with research on the streptococci, and, in addition, he participates in the overall program of the department.

Dr. Eli Gold, senior instructor in pediatrics and instructor in preventive medicine, was born in New Haven, Connecticut. He received his BS degree in 1942 and his MD from Western Reserve University School of Medicine in 1950. After three months as microbiologist

in the Connecticut State Department of Health, he entered the service of the United States Army. He served as technician in various Army medical laboratories, the last three years of his army career having been in the Respiratory Diseases Commission Laboratory, where he worked under Lt. Col. John H. Dingle, who is now the Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Professor of Preventive Medicine at Western Reserve.



DR. GOLD

Upon release from active duty he entered Western Reserve University School of Medicine. From his graduation to June, 1953, he trained at the Children's Medical Center, Boston, and then came to Cleveland to serve as chief resident in the Department of Pediatrics and Contagious Diseases at City Hospital for one year. From July, 1954 to July, 1955, he worked in the Department of Preventive Medicine, Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

He has been co-author of a number of important articles and presently devotes a major portion of his time to teaching and research studies in viral diseases.

Dr. Clifton B. Turner, demonstrator in pediatrics and assistant director of East Thirty-Fifth Street Clinic, another native Clevelander, received his BS degree from John Carroll University (1949) and MD degree from Western Reserve University (1952). After a year's rotating internship at City Hospital, he took 18 months of pediatric training at Babies and Childrens Hospital and six months' residency training in the Department of Pediatrics and Contagious Diseases, City Hospital.



DR. TURNER

The following are members of the part-time staff:

Assistant Professors of Pediatrics,
and Visiting Pediatricians

Wayne H. Borges '44
Walter Heymann
John H. Kennell

Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics
& Visiting Pediatrician, East 35th St. Clinic

Robert B. Hauver '22

*Senior Instructor in Pediatrics,
& Visiting Pediatrician*

R.J.P. Wedgewood

*Senior Clinical Instructor in Pediatrics
& Visiting Pediatrician*

Harold C. Epstein

*Instructors in Pediatrics & Visiting
Pediatrician, East 35th St. Clinic*

*Alexander N. Freed '25
M. Lewis Marten*

*Clinical Instructors in Pediatrics, &
Visiting Pediatricians, East 35th
St. Clinic*

*Paul C. Crone '34
Warren S. Kelley
Robert D. Mercer
F. Eugene Roach*

*Demonstrators in Pediatrics & Visiting
Pediatricians, East 35th St. Clinic*

*Arthur E. Burns
Helmut M. Dehn
Harold J. Ford
Lelabelle C. Freeman
Arnold B. Friedman
Clarence R. Laing
John H. Lewis*

*Demonstrators in Pediatrics, &
Visiting Pediatricians*

*Julius A. Gerlach '46
Joseph C. Hadden '48
Joseph C. Jenkins '47
Louis Leo Keppler, Jr.
Francis F. Silver '38
Viola V. Startzman '45
Creed F. Ward*

*Teaching Fellow in Pediatrics &
Chief Resident*

Maria Crea

Research Fellows

*David H. Carver
Martha J. Lipson '52
Juan C. Rivadeneira
Reich L. Watterson, Jr. '52*

Other Visitants, East 35th St. Clinic

*Wilva McIlmoyle
William B. Markus*

Visitants Emeritus

*Charles W. Burhans '45
John Hart Davis '48
Otto L. Goehle*