Oral histories focus on medical education, pediatric cardiology

The AAP Pediatric History Center is conducting oral history interviews as part of its mission to preserve and document pediatrics' rich heritage. The Historical Archives Advisory Committee, which guides the activities of the Pediatric History Center, is pleased to announce the completion of oral history interviews with R. James McKay Jr., M.D., FAAP, and Abraham M. Rudolph, M.D., FAAP.

Dr. McKay, a former AAP president (1970-'71), graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1943. Following an internship and residency at Babies Hospital, he was chief medical resident at Boston Children's Hospital and a fellow in pharmacology at Harvard. He served as a battalion surgeon in Europe for 22 months during World War II.

In the 1950s, Dr. McKay was recruited to develop a department of pediatrics at the University of Vermont, where he now is an emeritus professor. He discusses the development of the department and his philosophy of medical education in the interview.

Dr. McKay has authored and edited numerous publications, including serving on the editorial board of Pediatrics during a particularly difficult period in the 1960s. He recounts these experiences during the course of his interview.

Dr. Rudolph graduated from medical school at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, and completed internships at Johannesburg General Hospital, Transvaal Memorial Hospital for Children and Transvaal Memorial Hospital, all in South Africa. Unhappy with the political situation in South Africa at the time, he obtained a fellowship at Children's Hospital Boston, working with the late Alexander Nadas, M.D., FAAP, and moved to the United States. This fellowship ignited a lifelong interest in the study of physiology of infants and of the fetus.

Throughout his career, Dr. Rudolph has been involved in patient care, education and research. Following his fellowship, he held several other positions at Children's Hospital before he moved to Albert Einstein College of Medicine as director of the division of pediatric cardiology and professor of pediatrics and physiology.

Despite his reluctance to move west, Dr. Rudolph was enticed to the University of California, San Francisco, as professor of pediatrics, chief of the division of pediatric cardiology, and senior staff member of the Cardiovascular Research Institute (CVRI). It was there that he was able to pursue his important fetal research using the pregnant sheep model. This led to important advances in the treatment of ductus arteriosus in preterm infants.

This effort to gather historical information from those who participated in and shaped important events in pediatrics is ongoing. Numerous other interviews have been completed and are undergoing editorial review. Individual oral histories are available for purchase through AAP Publications at (888) 227-1770. The cost is $20 each to members. Transcripts also are available on the Members Only Channel of the AAP Web site, www.aap.org/moc.

For additional information on this project, call Susan Marshall, AAP Division of Library & Archival Services, at (800) 433-9016, ext. 4722.