



In Memoriam

Dr. Epps, advocate for underserved, advanced women's health initiatives



Dr. Epps

Roselyn Payne Epps, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, of Washington, D.C., died Sept. 29. A prominent African-American female physician role model and leader, Dr. Epps was dedicated to improving the care of underserved populations and minorities as well as advancing

women's health and public health.

Effective in contributing and collaborating on work goals at any level, Dr. Epps was dedicated to giving "all children the optimal conditions to thrive," said Renée R. Jenkins, M.D., FAAP, AAP past president. From the time Dr. Jenkins first met her in 1975 at Howard University, she noted Dr. Epps' respectful approach. Her dedication carried through even as she faced declining health this year. "She never stopped working for children, up to the end," said Dr. Jenkins.

Raised in the segregated South, she did not let discrimination stop her from advancing and helped pave the way for others. Dr. Epps was the first African-American and first female president of the AAP Washington, D.C., Chapter and the Medical Society of the District of Columbia. She also was the first African-American president of the American Medical Women's Association.

For 10 years, Dr. Epps served in leadership roles in the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health at the D.C. Department of Public Health, Clinic for

Retarded Children, the Infant and Preschool Division, the Children and Youth Project and the Bureau of Clinical Services. She then became chief, Bureau of Hospitals at the D.C. Department of Human Resources. In 1975, she assumed the role of chief of the Bureau of Clinical Services, then became acting commissioner of public health in 1980.

In the 1990s, she worked at the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health on the planning and implementation of strategies to distribute smoking prevention and cessation research results to health care professionals. There, she also worked on research initiatives on cancer screening and diagnosis.

Professor emerita of pediatrics and child health at Howard University, she served as chief of the Child Development Division and director of the Child Development Center, where she worked to assist children with special needs with learning.

As a member of the AAP Committee on Development, she was effective in reaching out to members for philanthropic support, said Dr. Jenkins. She also served on the Council on Community Pediatrics and was a founding board member of Every Child by Two.

Dr. Epps was preceded in death by her son, Charles H. Epps III, M.D., and is survived by her husband, Charles H. Epps Jr., M.D., three children, including Roselyn E. Epps, M.D., FAAP, and four grandchildren.