

Centennial Moments

PRESENTED BY THE HERITAGE ROOM, DEL E. WEBB MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Julia Ann White (1870–1957)

Physician, educator, administrator, and founder of the School of Nursing, Julia White is representative of the can-do spirit that launched Loma Linda University. A 1900 graduate of the American Medical Missionary College (AMMC), along with Lillian Eshelman Magan and Florence Armstrong Keller, she worked at Battle Creek Sanitarium and taught at her alma mater several years before going west in 1905 to join the staff of the infant Loma Linda Sanitarium and soon-to-be Loma Linda College of Evangelists (renamed College of Medical Evangelists, or CME, in 1909).

Thirty years later, Dr. White described her November 5, 1905, arrival at Loma Linda. “When we alighted at the depot, a few nurses and myself from the East, we were not met by an automobile. We walked up those 125 steps.

They told us that was where we got the ‘climb-ate’ in California, and we believed it by the time we got to the top.”

During her time at CME, Dr. White compiled an impressive list of firsts. She was the first woman physician on the Sanitarium staff. Seeing the need for more nursing staff in 1905, she initiated a nurses’ training program that became the first school of CME. She was a signer of CME’s Articles of Incorporation in 1910.

She was the first woman to serve as a CME board member

(1906-1916). In this responsibility, she was joined in 1911 by Josephine Gotzian, friend of Ellen G. White and benefactor of a number of Seventh-day Adventist sanitariums plus Madison College (both women were listed as honorary board



members 1918-1919).

No other woman served as a board member until 1950 when Kathryn Jensen Nelson from the School of Nursing became a member. In 1964, Cordelia Reynolds was the first woman elected as a full member to the board.

The School of Nursing flourished. Dr. White’s title was superintendent of lady nurses from 1907 to 1911, when her title changed to superintendent of nurses’ training school. She held this title until 1913. During this

time she taught physiology, obstetrics, and gynecology to the nurses.

When the School of Medicine was founded in 1909, she taught medicine, obstetrics, and gynecology to medical students. She continued as a faculty member until 1920, even after moving in 1916 first to Huntington Beach and then to Glendale. She started the School of Nursing at Glendale Sanitarium and Hospital—another first.

In 1916, Pacific Union Conference asked her to be one of the secretaries for the Women’s Movement, which successfully helped raise funds to build the White Memorial Hospital. Not one to rest on her already outstanding accomplishments, Dr. White, while in her 60s, established a free community clinic supported by the La Crescenta Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Summing up her life, Keld J. Reynolds, academic dean (1959-1964), wrote, “Julia White was one of that coterie of physician-graduates of the American Medical Missionary College, of Chicago and Battle Creek (Michigan), where they had been exposed to the genius of John Harvey Kellogg and the insights of Ellen G. White, of whom Dr. Kellogg was a respectful friend. To CME they brought a shining caduceus, no small factor in shaping its philosophy of medical education and practice.”