

Homer G. Phillips and the Legacy of Public Hospitals in St. Louis

In 1905 Dr. John Green, President of the St. Louis Medical Society, with a keen understanding of the plight of public hospitals in other cities issued this charge to St. Louis physicians on the eve of opening a new City Hospital:

“Will it vouchsafe to the pauper a medical care equivalent to that which his pecuniarily more fortunate fellow citizens receive? Will it fulfill to the utmost its function of providing instruction in practical medicine to the undergraduate student? And will our hospital be thoroughly in accord with the spirit of medical enlightenment?”

*Presidential Report, St. Louis Medical Review
January 14, 1905*

A succession of public hospitals failed in that charge -- City Hospital No. 1 (Max C. Starkloff), City Hospital No. 2, and St. Louis County Hospital, despite their professed missions, opened as segregated facilities. Only under duress, and toward the twilight of their existence, did they admit and treat irrespective of race, creed or color. There is one bright exception, the Homer G. Phillips Hospital. It opened its doors as a truly “public” facility in 1937, still shrouded in intrigue after the mysterious assassination of its main advocate and benefactor, attorney Homer Giliam Phillips. At a time in American society when people of color were restricted from most medical training programs, the Homer G. Phillips Hospital became the premier training ground for African American medical professionals – many of whom remained to deliver high quality health care in the St. Louis area and who later assumed prestigious positions throughout the nation. The successes of its subsequent years of operation (as well as the complex issues surrounding its closure) became legendary in the annals of public hospitals. It closed its doors on August 17, 1979, followed by St. Louis City No. 1 in 1985, St. Louis County Hospital in 1987, and St. Louis Regional Hospital in 1997. While we cannot now walk the halls of Homer G. Phillips Hospital, we can learn much from its history, presented by the very people who strived diligently to provide culturally sensitive care to the patients who so deeply trusted and loved them and their hospital. This lecture series is named in honor of the historic Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis.

 **Washington**
University in St. Louis
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Homer G. Phillips Public Health Lecture Series

“American Apartheid: Ethical Notes on History and Medicine”



Guest Speaker:

Harriet Washington

*Author, “Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of
Medical Experimentation with African Americans from
the Colonial Era to the Present”*

Friday, October 9, 2009

**Washington University School of Medicine
Eric P. Newman Education Center (EPNEC)
320 South Euclid Avenue
Saint Louis, Missouri 63110**

6:00 p.m.

Dinner

Great Rooms

7:00 p.m.

Lecture

Auditorium

8:00 p.m.

Panel Discussion

Auditorium

Speaker: Harriet Washington



Harriet A. Washington is a medical ethicist and writer whose work focuses upon the intersection of biotechnology, ethics and the history of medicine. She spent 2002-2005 as a Research Fellow in Medical Ethics at Harvard Medical School, has been a Visiting Scholar at DePaul University School of Law, a John S. Knight Fellow in Journalism at Stanford University, a Senior Fellow at Tuskegee University's Center For Bioethics, Fellow of the Stanford Professional Publishing Course and a recipient of the Harvard Journalism Fellowship for Advanced Studies in Public Health. She has been a contributor, news editor, science editor, and medical columnist for a number of esteemed national publications. Her many awards include a 2007

PEN Award, the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction, a Science Desk Award funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the Congressional Black Caucus Beacon of Light Award.

She has published in academic publications as well, among them JAMA, *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Nature*, the *American Journal of Public Health*, the *Harvard Public Health Review* and the *Harvard AIDS Review*. Washington is the founding editor of *The Harvard Journal of Minority Public Health*.

Ms. Washington has presented her work in public health, medical ethics and the history of medicine at dozens of universities both domestic and European, including Harvard Medical School, the University of Chicago Medical School, Stanford Law School, the Mayo Clinic, Albert Einstein Medical School and schools of medicine in Geneva, Vienna, Berlin and Lübeck. She was a Plenary Speaker at the American Society of Bioethics 2007 Annual Meeting, and has often given presentations and ethical grand rounds at schools of medicine, including the Mayo Clinic and the University of Chicago. She is the immediate past board president of the Ferre Institute, which is devoted to reproductive and genetics issues.

Ms. Washington's books on medicine include the award-winning 2007 best seller *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation with African Americans from the Colonial Era to the Present*, as well as lauded works on hepatitis C, on Parkinson's disease and African American health issues. Most recently she has written about ethics of nonconsensual medical research, of forensic DNA sweeps, and the role of race in the development of dermatology and the distortion of medical research by fiscal policies.

Ms. Washington is a member of the boards of *American Legacy magazine*, The New Press, DePaul University's Health Law Institute, and the *Journal of the National Medical Association*. She has taught at venues such as New School University, SUNY, the Rochester Institute of Technology, Writers & Books and has worked as a tutor in Latin at the University of Rochester and as a teaching assistant at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Program

Welcome	Will Ross, M.D., M.P.H. Associate Dean for Diversity Office of Diversity Programs
Introduction of..... Harriet Washington	Larry J. Shapiro, M.D. Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean for Medical Affairs
“American Apartheid: Ethical Notes on History and Medicine”	Harriet Washington
Presentations.....	Will Ross, M.D., M.P.H. Associate Dean for Diversity Office of Diversity Programs
Panel Discussion	Denise Hooks-Anderson, M.D. Frank Richards, M.D. Harriet Washington