

Distinguished Achievement Citation

H. Dewey Fritz

Class of 1921

Dr. H. Dewey Fritz's practice of medicine is a fifty-seven year saga of thrilling perseverance and achievement, often under adverse conditions.

In April 1927, Dr. Fritz hung out his shingle in Cathlamet, county seat of Wahkiakum County in the state of Washington. This little town on the shores of the Columbia River was separated by miles of water from hospitals and other amenities of civilization and was still living in primitive frontier conditions, such as an inadequate water supply, scarce electricity, few bathrooms and streets of mud and chuckholes.

After brief spells of trying to cope with the physical handicaps and the high disease rate and frequency of logging accidents, previous practitioners had moved on to less demanding environments.

Dr. Fritz's first patient was a young woman complaining of a discomfort which he immediately diagnosed as smallpox. Quick action by Dr. Fritz averted an epidemic.

His patients have not always received bills for services rendered. Sometimes payment has taken the form of fish, flowers, pickles and parakeets, rather than a more conventional form of remuneration.

For nearly six decades, Dr. Fritz has served the population of Wahkiakum County with dedication, patience, generosity and humor.

Today he conducts his practice from a modern office with laboratory and eight hospital beds— a far cry from its 1927 genesis.

In 1977, Dr. Fritz's fellow citizens of Cathlamet honored him with a decree proclaiming him "honorary citizen" in which he was described as "physician surgeon, counselor, neighbor, friend."

His consistent attention to the needs of humankind epitomizes the highest ideals of the medical profession and is a source of pride to his Alma Mater.

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