



President's Comment

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President

El Paso County Medical Society



Dr. William Gordon McGee: Dedicated El Paso Physician

How do we express our appreciation for what others have done for our community? Does the magnitude of their generosity impact the magnitude of our recognition of them? How do you thank a person who never asked for thanks, because that person just felt what they did was the right thing to do or that they were just doing their jobs?

I guess the right answer could be that no thanks are necessary at all. However, our society is geared toward recognizing those who have made outstanding contributions (contributions in their fields, contributions to their towns, or contributions to our country). We bestow upon them accolades such as awards, medals, or plaques. Sometimes when warranted, we place their names on public display in parks, buildings, or streets. How do we decide when a person's lifelong magnanimous contributions warrant permanent public recognition?

Here in El Paso there are many examples already of these public acknowledgements. We have the Don Haskins Center, Cohen stadium, William Beaumont hospital. There are streets such as Mills Avenue, Wallenberg Drive, and Lee Trevino Drive. There are Schuster and Yandell streets already named after physicians here in El Paso.

Dr. William Yandell in the late 1800s came to El Paso because of asthma and served as El Paso County physician. He was passionate about sanitation and bringing clean water to El Paso and Juarez. He also took part in and helped clean up local politics. Dr. Michael Philip Schuster came to El Paso as the company physician for the Asarco smelter. He founded Providence Hospital at its first location on Santa Fe in 1902. Both physicians became long-time residents of El Paso and dedicated their careers to improving health on the border, and they were justifiably recognized by our city for their efforts with streets named in their honor.

It seems to me that we are long past due to bestow the same recognition that was imparted on Dr. Schuster and Yandell to another physician who is worthy of the same distinction. Dr. William Gordon McGee also dedicated his career to improving the health of residents on the border. His achievements were multitudinous. He was the founder of El Paso's Emergency Medical Service system. He served as president of this El Paso County Medical Society in 1979, and president of the Texas Medical Association in 1990. He was president of the Texas Medical Foundation and Texas Society of Pathologists. He was Chairman of the Board for the El Paso City-

County Health Board and for El Paso First, where he fought to make health insurance available to children from low-income families. He was appointed by Governor Mark White to the Texas Tech University board of regents, where he worked to establish the El Paso medical school as a four-year institution, possibly one of his greater achievements. Amazingly, even with all of this tireless work, he managed to remain a dedicated husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

Although I did not know Dr. McGee personally, those whom I have spoken to familiar with him are quite sure that Dr. McGee was humble and never sought out recognition for his work. Former TMA president Jim Bob Brame said it best when he presented Dr. McGee with the TMA Distinguished Service Award in 1998; "a TMA treasure who achieves by goodwill." This may be all the more reason to provide this permanent recognition for him.

The El Paso County Medical Society and several local and state politicians have already voiced their desire to see a street named after him. These politicians include but are not limited to Senator Jose R. Rodriguez, Veronica Escobar, and past TMA president Josie R. Williams, MD. Mayor Cook and city council members have been in receipt of these letters for several years. I think the time has come for our members to speak out and help make a street or park named after Dr. William Gordon McGee. Clearly, Dr. McGee's work was no less important than the accomplishments of Dr. Yandell and Dr. Schuster. He and his family have earned our support in this endeavor. This would help assure that his legacy and vision will continue to impact our health and lives in El Paso for many years into the future. I implore you to call the Medical Society office at 915-533-0940. Express your support and willingness to allow us to use your name to push this agenda item forward.

Bruce J. Applebaum, M.D.
President, El Paso County Medical Society

COMING SOON

Physician / Medical Students Honduras trip
March 2013. Contact the El Paso County Medical
Society at 533-0940 for more information

**Texas Medical Association 2012
Border Health Caucus**



Dr. Benavides, Michele Romero, Dr. Manuel Acosta, Jake Fuller, and Dr. Bailey.



Dr. Gilbert Handal and medical students from TTUHSC - Paul L. Foster School of Medicine.



Dr. Luis H. Urrea II



Dr. Gonzalez



Dr. Roxanne Tyroch



Dr. Manny Acosta and members of the Border Health Caucus



Dr. Gilbert Handal