



# Whole Healing:

an interview with  
life-long healer  
**Gladys McGarey, MD**

BY DOMINIQUE PERKINS

This month we discuss membership — its forms, benefits, responsibilities, and privileges. Some memberships we join exclusively because of the perks we receive, such as shopping loyalty cards that win us points for doing what we were already going to do — buying clothes, groceries, and everyday household necessities. Other memberships you have to put a little more into, such as joining a gym or fitness program.

But, in any case, no matter how big or how small, the memberships we keep do say something about us as people. They communicate where we spend our time, how we spend our money, what we find important, how we identify ourselves in our personal and professional lives. Aligning ourselves with a particular organization is an opportunity for us to get involved and stand for something, even on a small level.

Outside of loyalty programs that give us coupons and save us money, we





tend to join organizations that mean something to us. We join because we want to be a part of something. We join to band together with like-minded peers and colleagues. We join because we like the direction things are headed. And, sometimes, we join to make things happen.

Our profile physician this month has more than enough experience with membership — and with making things happen! Dr. Gladys McGarey is certainly not one to watch from the sidelines. In addition to being actively involved in medicine for over 70 years, she has co-founded medical organizations, non-profit groups, medical practices, academies, and symposiums; authored books; served as a public speaker; and many, many other incredible accomplishments.

Even now, she continues to find ways to serve her community and stay involved in healthcare, and she is celebrating her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday this year! Physician, founder, writer, speaker, and pioneer, surely she is the perfect physician to embody our issue dedicated to those who affect change through their involvement.

### **Early adventures on the international stage**

McGarey had a firm hold on her goal to become a physician at the early age of 2 years old, and in over 70 years of involvement she has never looked back. She had a fine example to lend weight and encouragement to her ambition and desire to serve, not to mention set the stage for the direction she would eventually make the focus of so much of her impressive career — her parents were both physicians.

Not only physicians, both her parents were taught by Andrew Taylor Still, MD, DO — the Father of Osteopathy and Osteopathic Medicine. McGarey still has both of their diplomas, signed by Dr. Still.

Her parents took their medical degrees and training to India, serving as medical missionaries for the Presbyterian Church in 1914. McGarey was born in November of 1920, in the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains.

"I grew up, living in tents, in the winter time, watching my parents treat anyone who came to them, no matter who they were or what their problem was," McGarey said.

Amidst a backdrop of elephants, mountains, lepers, and Indian safaris, her childhood and adolescence was filled with sensational adventures and experiences — too many to relate here. Just two such examples (and greatly opposing ones, at that) include an attempted recruitment for Hitler's youth army by the Third Reich, and a train ride interrupted by chanting followers led by Mahatma Gandhi himself.

She attended an international school in the high Himalayas through high school. After graduating, she moved to the United States to attend college at Muskingum University, in New Concord, Ohio, and, in the fall of 1941, she began studying at the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia. That December, shortly after beginning her medical education, World War II began, and everything changed.

"My entire medical training was in the context of the war," McGarey said.

It was during this time that she met William McGarey, MD, (Bill) who had received his medical degree from the University of Cincinnati. The two were married, and after she graduated McGarey and Bill began a joint family practice in Bill's hometown of Wellsville, Ohio. They stayed in Ohio until 1951, when Bill was called back into the air force as a flight surgeon.

While serving, he spent some time in Phoenix and

Tucson, and fell in love with the area. McGarey was also quite taken with the place.

"When he was discharged we moved here to Phoenix, which was much more like India for me and I loved it," she said.

### Setting up in Phoenix

Once she arrived in Arizona, McGarey got straight to work. She and her husband began by setting up shop behind a pharmacy, and soon built The Olive Tree Medical Group. In 1964, the practice hired Edna Germain, FNP. Germain held the first license as a Family Nurse Practitioner in the state of Arizona.

A great supporter of natural birthing, McGarey tackled the difficulties of women who needed support when giving birth at home.

"I needed some program for their education, and some way to have emergency equipment and/or transportation at hand," she said.

She founded The Baby Buggy program, which featured a fully-equipped mobile ambulance specifically available for home deliveries.

"I worked with Barbara Brown, an FNP; a nurse midwife; and some wonderful OBGYNs who would respond to my calls," McGarey said.

McGarey also spent years lobbying to include husbands in the delivery room, and finally achieved her first success on that front at the County Medical Center.

In 1989, she and her daughter Helene Wechsler, MD, established the Scottsdale Holistic Medical Group in Scottsdale, Arizona. The practice would later change names — now The Scottsdale Private Physicians.

### Bringing a holistic approach

McGarey is Board-certified in Holistic & Integrated Medicine, and throughout her career has been a pioneer for bringing these principles to the forefront of healthcare. In fact, she is internationally recognized as the Mother of Holistic Medicine.

Her life and practice reflect the belief that even some of life's most devastating afflictions can be met and overcome with a mixture of natural therapies, traditional medicine, and prayer.

Recognizing that there are many approaches throughout the world not in the standardly recognized lexicon of healthcare studies, McGarey sought to bridge the gap by introducing holistic elements and sharing ideas to increase awareness of a whole-body approach to diagnosis and healthcare, believing that the body is

a unit, capable of self-regulation and healing, and that rational treatment is dependent on an understanding of the whole-body unit and the interrelationship of structure & function.

In about 1970, she and her husband founded the A. R. E. Clinic in Phoenix, Arizona, a pioneer program in the field of integration of allopathic and holistic medical practicing. In conjunction with the practice, they also began an annual medical symposium, dealing with concepts of energy and alternative medicine, held at the Safari Hotel in Scottsdale.

They also founded The Academy for Parapsychology and Medicine, which held major symposiums up and down the west coast, with as many as 1,000 people in attendance.

Their very first symposium was held at Stanford Medical School, where 280 physicians showed up to hear a presentation regarding acupuncture.

"President Nixon had just come back from China and reported on witnessing an appendectomy done with only acupuncture anesthesia," she said. McGarey was the first to utilize acupuncture in the US, and trained other physicians in its use as well.

McGarey's efforts served to lay the groundwork for the cultural shift of recent years. Her efforts worldwide continue to receive international acclaim. Today, alternative and holistic medical modalities are much more widely recognized and considered, and DO's are one of the fastest-growing segments of healthcare professionals in the US, with 92,028 DO's in 2014 (according to the 2014 Osteopathic Medical Professional Report). Additionally, approximately 42% of all US Hospitals now offer nonconventional medical services (according to a 2016 Newsmax Health report).

### Beyond practice

In addition to her work within her practice group, broadening awareness of holistic medicine integration through symposiums, and public speaking engagements, McGarey also found other ways to fight to close the gap between conventional and holistic medicine. In 1978 she co-founded the American Holistic Medical Association.

"We created the Arizona Homeopathic & Integrative Medical Association (AHIMA) here in AZ so that MD's and DO's who had adequate training in aspects of alternative medicine could practice," McGarey said.

She was heavily involved with the association, serving as president, and chair of the board for many years. She describes the work as continually ongoing.



"I have always felt that it was important to work within the current structure to bring about change, not against it," McGarey said of her work and ongoing involvement with organized medicine. "Work with what is already working and do what you can to fix what is not working."

In addition to cofounding the AHIMA, McGarey has also been involved with MCMS for many years.

"MCMS has not always understood what I was working with, like acupuncture, but it allowed us to put on the first conference on acupuncture in Arizona so that physicians could hear about it," she said.

Around 1989, she also created what is now known as The Foundation for Living Medicine (formerly called The Gladys Taylor McGarey Medical Foundation). This non-profit organization helps to expand the knowledge and application of holistic principles through scientific research and education, working to shift the current disease model to one that focuses on the individual and the wholeness of life.

"Through the years our foundation has had a program where senior medical students who have shown an interest in holistic medicine can spend a month with physicians who are actively practicing holistic medicine and shadow them," McGarey said.

The Foundation for Living Medicine is actively working with Mesa Community College at Red Mountain to further the work of Living Medicine, she said.

McGarey semi-retired in 2005, and travelled to Afghanistan along with her brother, Carl Taylor, MD, to educate village women. Their maternal death rate was higher than any other place in the world, and McGarey reports that her work there, and the results, have been very gratifying.

She described her mission as, "First, listening carefully to the wisdom and healing traditions of rural village people, then offering education, training and treatment that support and augment their practices."

In addition to birthing education throughout the regions of Afghanistan, McGarey also spent time in Northern India, implementing international holistic medical projects there.

## A celebrated figure

The scope of McGarey's career sweeps across decades, continents, practices, organizations, and philosophies. In addition to her practice, travels, and non-profit work, she has also written and lectured extensively. She has written four books: "The Physician Within You," "Born to Live," "Living Medicine," and "The World Needs Old Ladies." She is also the subject of another book, "Born to Heal," which was written by her daughter, Analea McGarey.

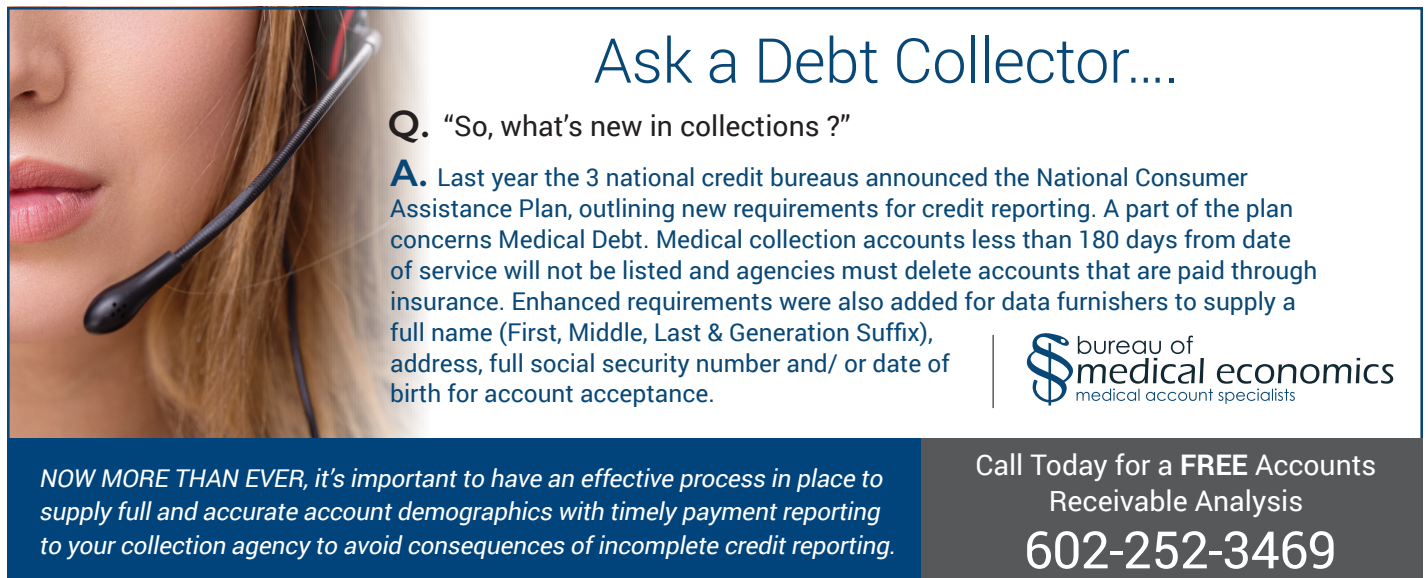
McGarey continues to write numerous articles for health publications, both as a columnist and feature writer. Her prolific public speaking career spans four decades, and she has shared the podium with many notable figures of the medical world, including Andrew Weil, Deepak Chopra, Wayne Dyer, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, and others. ■

## DOMINIQUE PERKINS

Dominique joined the Maricopa County Medical Society's staff in 2014, and is currently serving as the Communications Coordinator. She has a bachelor's degree in Communications and Journalism, and over 6 years' experience as a writer, editor, and social media strategist.



Dominique also enjoys helping with Society events. Be sure to look for her the next time you attend! Dominique can be reached at [dperkins@mcmsonline.com](mailto:dperkins@mcmsonline.com).



## Ask a Debt Collector...

**Q.** "So, what's new in collections?"

**A.** Last year the 3 national credit bureaus announced the National Consumer Assistance Plan, outlining new requirements for credit reporting. A part of the plan concerns Medical Debt. Medical collection accounts less than 180 days from date of service will not be listed and agencies must delete accounts that are paid through insurance. Enhanced requirements were also added for data furnishers to supply a full name (First, Middle, Last & Generation Suffix), address, full social security number and/ or date of birth for account acceptance.

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## Gladys McGarey, MD | On the Personal Side

### Describe yourself in one word.

I have been called a Trailblazer.

### What is your favorite food, and favorite restaurant in the Valley?

Favorite food – Indian. Restaurant – Jewel of the Crown.

### What career would you be doing if you weren't a physician?

Aside from being a mother and grandmother and great-grandmother, I can't think of any other career. I knew when I was 2 years old that I would be a doctor.

### What's a hidden talent you have, that most wouldn't know about?

I knit and do embroidery.

### Family?

I have 6 children, 3 are physicians. Eldest son a retired orthopedic surgeon in Washington State. Daughter, Helene Wechsler, a family physician here in Scottsdale. And youngest son, David, an ophthalmologist in Flagstaff. Second son a Presbyterian minister in New Mexico, and third son a psychologist in Austin, Texas.

I have 10 grandchildren. One granddaughter is an osteopathic family physician in Pennsylvania, another granddaughter is in medical school in Virginia, another granddaughter is an archivist and yoga master, a grandson in medical school in Ohio, the rest are still in school — and 3 are engineers.

I also have 5 great grandchildren. ■