

OVERCOMING DISPARITIES: *Highlights* *from our past*



Dr. Milton Rosenau, Founding Dean, UNC School of Public Health

Dr. Milton Rosenau, the UNC School of Public Health’s first dean, believed that every person deserved sufficient education and resources to “meet the needs of his body and the demands of his health.”

From its inception, the UNC School of Public Health followed his lead in working diligently to improve the public’s health through cutting-edge research, innovative program development, and high-quality public health education and health services delivery. Faculty and students worked with communities around the world, especially African-American communities throughout the U.S. South, whose quality of life was compromised by poverty, disease and limited educational opportunities.

The School’s community and human rights focus in the United States set it apart from more clinically-oriented public health schools at Harvard and Johns Hopkins universities.

From the start, the School at UNC had an independent, reform-minded spirit, resulting in an unprecedented number of women faculty members and students, groundbreaking development of multiracial teams working with North Carolina communities as early as the 1940s, and social activism beginning in the ’60s.

The School’s early history, according to UNC Kenan Professor Emeritus Dr. John Hatch, was driven by “decent people, in the right place at the same time, all trying to do

BY LINDA KASTLEMAN

the right thing.” Their work has set the pace for research, teaching and practice being done now to reduce health disparities. Here, we look briefly at two examples of the School’s commitment—Dr. Lucy Morgan’s pioneering collaboration in the 1940s with the North Carolina College for Negroes (now North Carolina Central University) and the establishment of the Minority Student Caucus in 1976. Along with the timeline below, we highlight the roots of the School’s commitment to overcoming racial and ethnic disparities in health and education.

Dr. Lucy Morgan: “A revolutionary, in the best sense of the word”

By all accounts, Dr. Lucy Shields Morgan was a powerhouse. As the founding chair of the UNC School of Public Health’s Department of Public Health Education — the first of its kind in the country — she was both pioneering and revolutionary. »



Dr. Lucy Morgan

History in the Making:

A selected timeline of our School’s work in overturning health disparities

1930s

1936
Dr. Milton Rosenau becomes director of the new Division of Public Health at the UNC School of Medicine, intent upon developing the practical aspects of public health and addressing the health needs of all people.

1940s

1940
The Division of Public Health separates from the UNC School of Medicine and becomes the UNC School of Public Health, with Rosenau as dean.

1942
Dean Rosenau invites Yale-educated Dr. Lucy Morgan to teach and develop a curriculum in public health education at the UNC School of Public Health. Twenty-five students enroll in spring 1943.



1945–46: First Health Education class at N.C. College for Negroes

1945
Morgan designs and teaches a collaborative public health education program—led by UNC faculty—at the North Carolina College for Negroes (later N.C. Central University), UNC and in her own home. Her ground-breaking (and rules-breaking) training for public health workers becomes a national model for effective health care delivery and public health education. Her efforts may have been the first, if unsanctioned, instances of integration in the classroom at UNC.

1950s

1950
Eleanor Roosevelt speaks to a public health education class on the UNC campus at the invitation of Dr. Lucy Morgan.



Indian Reservation in the U.S. Southwest, circa 1950s

1955
The School’s Department of Health Education contracts with the U.S. Public Health Service to create a health education training program focused on the needs of American Indians.

1959
Dr. John Cassel, a South African expatriate who left his country because of its apartheid policies, becomes the first chair of the School’s new Department of Epidemiology.

1960s

1960–62
UNC Epidemiology Professor Dr. Sidney Kark (a South African expatriate whose research includes studies of syphilis in African populations) and UNC Epidemiology Professor Dr. John Cassel launch the Evans County (Georgia) Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Epidemiologic Study to find out why Black male sharecroppers have lower rates of heart attacks than middle-class white males in that county. The study is the first to confirm the importance of physical activity in promoting cardiovascular health and was, for some time, the only cardiovascular disease cohort study with a substantial enrollment of Black participants.

Throughout this decade, School faculty and students are involved in sit-ins and marches advocating desegregation and civil rights. African-American and international students grow in number, and their presence serves as a catalyst for change.

Timeline compiled by Linda Kastleman

Morgan's father was president of the University of Tennessee and director of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Harcourt Morgan valued the TVA's ability to make the lives of ordinary citizens more efficient and comfortable so that the larger community could thrive. "Man's greatest need in the distraction of the age," he noted, "is to see the unity that runs through diversity. No two people are alike, yet we are all brothers."

Having adopted her father's ideology, Morgan earned her doctorate from Yale in 1938 and founded a community health program in Hartford, Conn., which included African-Americans among its administrators and served as a model for similar programs around the country. In 1941, she joined the U.S. Public Health Service and was sent to Fort Bragg, N.C., to study the rise of prostitution at the military base. Almost as soon as she arrived in North Carolina, she was invited by Dean Rosenau to develop a curriculum in Public Health Education at Carolina's new School of Public Health.

At that time, Dr. James Shepard, president of the North Carolina College for Negroes (NCC) in Durham, N.C., had been negotiating with the General Education Board to create graduate-level training in public health for African-American students. His vision was to establish a master's degree program in health education at NCC. Morgan was asked to

explore the feasibility of developing such a program, and she quickly determined that a need existed.

NCC faculty, however, had not yet been trained in public health education. Given the still-segregated campus at UNC at Chapel Hill, Morgan led her faculty to NCC's campus in Durham to teach master's level courses in public health education. Morgan often held joint classes for NCC and UNC students in her home.

Her strategy for field work was radical in the segregated South. Pairing white and African-American students, she sent two-person teams into rural communities where health education and health services were most needed. "They had to be introduced to each other," she recounted in Robert Korstad's *Dreaming of a Time*, a history of the School's first 50 years. "They had never done that before. At that time, [whites] were not supposed to eat with Blacks, so we always had refreshments at the meetings. We had open houses when people came in from the field, Black and white together. Then it got bitter for awhile, and we used to pull down the shades sometimes when we had meetings in Chapel Hill."

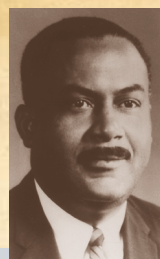
Morgan's contribution to the health education program was incalculable.

African-American graduates of the program became faculty—both at NCC (including Dr. Howard Fitts, who chaired NCC's Department of Health Education and later served on the Durham County Board of Health) and at UNC (including Dr. Howard Barnhill, who also served in the N.C. General Assembly). Morgan helped grow the health education department into the largest of its kind at a school of public health in the country, and oversaw, during the 1950s and '60s, the training of almost half the country's health educators.

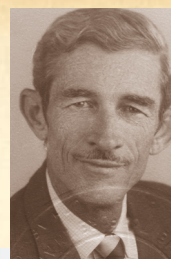
UNC President Emeritus William C. Friday, whose wife, Ida, studied with Morgan in the master of public health education program and later taught there, called Morgan a "pioneering integrationist with a depth of soul that was instructive and remarkable; a revolutionary, in the best sense of that word." ■



Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, an untiring advocate of the public's health and safety, addresses Dr. Lucy Morgan's health education class in 1950. A friend of the Morgan family, Roosevelt visited the campus at Morgan's invitation.



Dr. Edward V. Ellis



Dr. Guy Steuart

This decade is characterized by an exponential increase in the number of minority faculty and students at the School. Two departments are chaired by minorities.

1970s

1964

William A. Darity (June) and Edward V. Ellis (August) become the first African-Americans to receive doctoral degrees (in health education) from the UNC School of Public Health and the UNC Graduate School.

1968

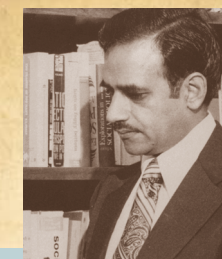
South African native Dr. Guy Steuart joins the UNC School of Public Health as chair of the Department of Health Education (later called the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education). In his work with colleagues in South Africa, Steuart developed the Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis methodology, which uses an interdisciplinary approach to gain a nuanced understanding of the dynamics, resources and problems of communities and how they affect the living conditions and health of individuals who live in them. This methodology is now taught at the UNC School of Public Health and is often used in working with poor or vulnerable communities (see page 57).

1971

After Black students express concern, Dr. Fred Mayes, the School's third dean, appoints William T. "Bill" Small to the position of coordinator of minority affairs at the School with a charge to increase the School's minority student enrollment. Within the next year, the number of minority students increases from 20 to 49.

1971

The Black Student Caucus of the UNC School of Public Health is organized.



Dr. Sagar Jain

1971–86

Dr. Sagar Jain, born in India and educated in the United States, becomes chair of the Department of Health Administration (later to become the Department of Health Policy and Administration).



Dr. Bernard Greenberg

1972–82

Dr. Bernard Greenberg, founder and chair of the Department of Biostatistics from 1949-72, becomes dean. To increase minority enrollment, as much as half the scholarship assistance offered during some years of his tenure is reserved for minority students. Greenberg also encouraged the School's departmental chairs to actively recruit minority faculty, an endorsement that resulted in significant increases in African-American faculty at the School.

1974

John W. Hatch, an African-American, receives his Doctor of Public Health from UNC and joins the faculty of the School's Department of Health Behavior and Health Education. He later becomes Kenan Professor of Health Behavior and Health Education. His work and the department's emphasis on community organizing results in projects aimed at improving the health of minorities.



Dr. John W. Hatch

Public health as a movement:

Minority Student Caucus evolves from grassroots efforts



Students attend presentation at the 1984 Minority Health Conference. From its humble beginnings in 1977, the conference has grown to include more than 400 participants each year.

In his laboratory work, UNC School of Public Health Epidemiology Professor and South African expatriate Dr. John Cassel found that disruption of “society” in a community of rats caused disorientation, stress and illness. He observed similar patterns in his work providing medical care to the poor in South Africa. People in difficult situations, Cassel found, coped better if they could depend on others to understand and support them. He further posited that even when one

could not intervene with money or services to improve the well-being of a community, one could at least work to create a more psychologically supportive environment.

Such revelations were applicable in the late 1960s on the Chapel Hill campus. Black students, new to campus and in an environment of upheaval, faced the stresses of isolation and of faculty and programs that did not always understand or meet their needs. Many minority students working toward master’s degrees had been in the work force for years before returning to school. They wanted more opportunities to discuss career goals and challenges specific to minority public health professionals.

African-American graduate students began meeting informally in the early ’70s for support and to exchange ideas. Dr. John Hatch, an African-American, was among this group. Hatch came to UNC in 1971 as a doctoral student teaching at the School of Public Health. Ultimately, he became a Kenan Professor in the School’s Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, retiring in 1995.

In 1971, Dr. Fred Mayes, the School’s third dean, appointed William T. “Bill”

Small, himself African-American, to become a full-time minority recruiter at the School to ensure that potential minority students were identified, encouraged to apply and assured of help with financial aid if accepted.

Small—who ultimately became associate dean and senior advisor for multicultural affairs, retiring in 1999—had many contacts among African-American public health professionals in North Carolina communities and health departments and created much interest in the program. As minority student enrollment doubled that year, the Black Student Caucus came into being to support the needs and goals of this growing population. It also served as a vehicle for bringing concerns to the attention of the School’s administration.

In 1976, graduate students Eugenia Eng, a Chinese American, Victoria Washington, an African-American, and Cherry Beasley, a Lumbee Indian, advocated that the Caucus be inclusive of students from all racial and ethnic groups, so that their unique strengths, needs and concerns could be addressed. That year, by unanimous vote of the membership,



Dr. John Hatch came to UNC in 1971 as a doctoral student teaching at the School of Public Health. Ultimately, he became a Kenan Professor in the School’s Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, retiring in 1995.

the Black Student Caucus became the Minority Student Caucus of the School of Public Health.

In 1977, the Caucus organized its first annual Minority Health Conference—a day-long event highlighting health ➤



Dr. Joseph Edozien

1980s



Dr. Jo Anne Earp

1990s



Dr. William Roper



Dr. Paul Godley

1975-86

Dr. Joseph Edozien, of Nigeria, serves as chair of the Department of Nutrition.

1976

The Black Caucus becomes the School’s Minority Student Caucus.

1977

The School’s Minority Student Caucus organizes the first annual Minority Health Conference. The conference has been held every year since then, with the exception of 1989 and 1990 (see pages 43 and above).

1985

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services releases its task force report on Black and minority health. The School gets federal research funding to study critical minority health issues, including:

- A continuation of the Evans County study on cardiovascular health and exercise;
- A study of blood pressure among Blacks in Edgecombe County;
- Smoking cessation research, conducted in collaboration between School faculty and the Black-owned N.C. Mutual Life Insurance Co.; and
- A Minority Cancer Control Research Program, which includes the New Hanover Breast Cancer Screening Program (forerunner of the N.C. Breast Cancer Screening Program, directed by Dr. Jo Anne Earp from 1992 to 2002—see page 31) and studies of fiber intake by Blacks.

1991

Victor J. Schoenbach, a 1979 Department of Epidemiology graduate and faculty member, works with William T. Small, Jr., to restart the Annual Minority Health Conference after a two-year hiatus. He is later made principal investigator of the School’s Minority Health Project, continuing the Project’s Annual Videoconference and initiating broadcasts from the Annual Minority Health Conference.

1994

The School’s Minority Health Project is started.

1994

The UNC School of Public Health and the UNC Kenan-Flagler School of Business together obtain funding for the Emerging Leaders in Public Health program, which identifies minority public health leaders and helps them develop ways to manage resources and communicate effectively about health crises within their communities.

1997

With funding from GlaxoSmithKline, federal agencies and others, Dean William Roper launches The Program on Ethnicity, Culture and Health Outcomes (ECHO) (see www.echo.unc.edu).

1997

Dr. Paul Godley, adjunct associate professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at the School, and Dr. Daniel Howard of Shaw University, receive a five-year National Institutes of Health grant to create the Carolina-Shaw Partnership for the Elimination of Health Disparities (see page 42).

issues of concern for people of color. Designed to attract students interested in minority health to the School, the event featured Keynote Speaker Floyd McKissick, a lawyer and civil rights activist in North Carolina.

The Conference—now in its 28th year—has become an important educational event, attracting more than 400 public health practitioners, human services professionals, research staff, students and faculty from all over the country each year (see page 43).

In 1999, Dean William Roper permanently named the conference’s keynote lecture for Small, recognizing his essential role in recruiting and mentoring minority students to the School for more than a quarter of a century.

The Minority Student Caucus continues to be a strong force at the School, uniting students and serving as a vehicle for bringing the concerns of minority students to the forefront. The Caucus also works with the School’s administration on Project Reach to link to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, especially in North Carolina, and to institutions serving other minority groups. ■



Dr. Bill Jenkins with Dara Mendez (left), a doctoral student in maternal and child health, and Mayra Alvarez (right) a 2005 graduate of the School’s Department of Health Policy and Administration. Mendez and Alvarez coordinated the 2005 Minority Health Conference.

CAROLINA’S SCHOOL of PUBLIC HEALTH APPOINTS SPECIAL ASSISTANT to the DEAN for DIVERSITY & continues tradition of cultivating diversity

BY LINDA KASTLEMAN

Dr. Jessie Satia was born in the state of Washington but grew up in Cameroon.

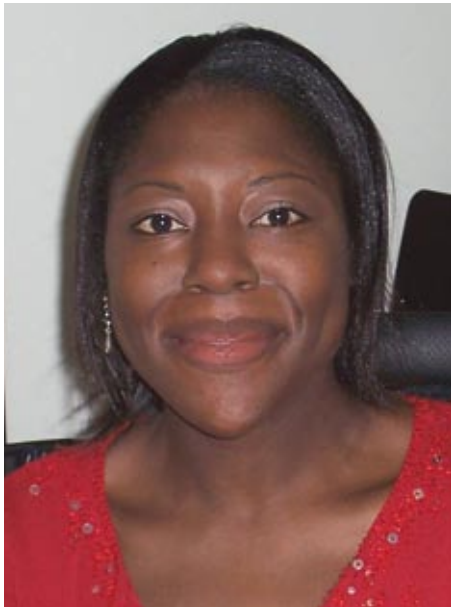
“I am quite literally an ‘African-American,’ having lived in both places,” she says. Now, Satia, assistant professor in the UNC School of Public Health’s Departments of Nutrition and Epidemiology, has accepted the challenge of bringing more minority students, faculty and staff to the School.

In appointing Satia to the position of special assistant to the dean for diversity last January, Dean Barbara K. Rimer noted, “When diversity is everyone’s business, sadly, it often is nobody’s job. In creating this role, I wanted to make it *somebody’s* business and, by doing so, help us all. Dr. Satia is the perfect choice. We wanted her to return to UNC, after spending two years in industry. She’s an impeccable scientist and teacher and a charismatic person who will be able to motivate others to join her journey.”

Satia continues the School’s tradition of encouraging minority students and faculty to come to Carolina. From the outset, School leaders have recognized the need for the faculty, staff and student body to reflect the diversity of the N.C. and U.S. populations (see timeline on page 48). In that sense, Satia follows in the footsteps of Dr. William T. Small, Jr., who came to UNC in 1971 as coordinator of minority affairs with a charge to increase minority student enrollment in graduate degree programs. During Small’s 28-year tenure, he continued to enhance the diversity of the School population.

Satia brings a unique perspective to her role. Her parents, both of whom have doctoral degrees, are from Cameroon. Her mother, who has a Ph.D. in educational psychology, and her father, a fisheries expert, were studying at the University of Washington—Seattle, when she was born.

“When my parents finished school and worked for a while—I was about four years old at the time—they decided they wanted to return to Africa and give back to their homeland,” Satia says. ►



Dr. Jessie Satia

2000



Dr. Barbara K. Rimer



Dr. Jessie Satia

and beyond...

2005

Dr. Barbara K. Rimer is named dean and makes overcoming health disparities a primary goal in her leadership of the School.

2006

Dean Rimer appoints Dr. Jessie Satia, assistant professor of epidemiology and nutrition, as special assistant to the dean for diversity, with a focus on increasing the number of diverse faculty members. School’s mission statement is revised to include focus on health disparities.

2006

UNC School of Public Health is selected as one of only 12 schools to participate in the Engaged Institutions Initiative, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The initiative supports the sustained efforts of institutions of higher education working in partnership with communities to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities.

2006

The Department of Maternal and Child Health receives a federal grant enabling the launch of a new doctoral training program in applied epidemiology aimed at addressing health inequities.

2006

The School’s Collaborative Studies Coordinating Center receives \$22 million federal contract to coordinate a nationwide health study of Hispanics in the United States. The Hispanic Community Health Study will examine the impact of acculturation—adapting to life in a new environment and culture—on the health of the U.S. Hispanic population.