

# Dr. Dorothy White Delivered, Cared for Generation of North Tillamook County Residents

Always on call, such was the life of Dr. Dorothy White (Rinehart) as the leading obstetrical physician at the Harvey E. Rinehart Memorial Hospital during the 1950's and 1960's. "Mother would get the call that a baby was on the way, and fly over Nehalem hill to get from our house in Manzanita to the Hospital in Wheeler," said daughter Diane Gibson. "She'd come over the hill with all four tires off the ground. The volunteer ambulance drivers wanted to give her a siren for her car, but she didn't want to draw attention. She always drove fast." Dr. White is renowned in the area for her caring and attention to hundreds of patients, especially the many babies she delivered and their mothers. "She saved my life" was the oft-repeated phrase during many interviews, as many experienced hemorrhaging during delivery ... "She stayed with me through the night." Dr. White was devoted to her patients, her family and North Tillamook County.



Dorothy Woods White was born in Everett, Washington on October 24, 1911 to Herbert and Martha Woods White. She did her undergraduate work at the University of Washington. "She had to work for a few years to earn money for medical school as her father didn't support her decision," said daughter Diane. "When she showed her determination, and completed a year of medical school, then her father helped." Dr. White graduated with honors from the University of Oregon Medical

School in 1941, one of two women graduates that year. She did her internship in Rochester, Minnesota, then returned to Wheeler where she joined The Rinehart Clinic in 1942 where she practiced for over 40 years. Dr. White saw patients well into her 80's. "She listened to people," said daughter Patty Rinehart. "It made it difficult for her after she retired to go out as people would tell her their stories and explain ailments at the bank, post office or grocery store wherever she went. She was honored and always took the time to listen."



During her medical practice, appointments with Dr. White lasted an hour. She set an example for children and the young people of this community, and especially for her children. "Mom said I could do anything," said Diane Gibson. "During college when a professor told me that women didn't get hired at big eight accounting firms, I was shocked, but my mom said I could do anything, so I did." Diane worked at a big eight accounting firm for three years. "We were expected to stand on our own," said Patty. Many of us young girls, delivered by Dr. White, then cared for by her during our childhood and teen years realized how unique and special it was to have a woman doctor.

"She was on 'doctor time' ... mother was always late," said Diane. The daughters' memories are of much time spent waiting in the car for their mother to see "just one more patient." Dr. White always took the month of August off for vacation, going to the Tillamook County Fair and a trip to visit her parents in Everett. "But we often had to wait for 'so-and-so' to have their baby," said Patty. "And I think she drove fast all the time to scare us kids," added Patty. "It kept us quiet." Diane and Patty were two of six children of Dr. White and Robert E. Rinehart – in 1943 first-born Robert, 1945 brought Harry (the current Dr. Rinehart), 1947 the first daughter, Gail was born, then in 1949 Diane, and 15 months later, in 1950, Patricia (Patty) was born and the youngest,

Cynthia (Cindy) in 1953. The sisters delighted in relating as many stories about their brother, Harry as they did



about their mother. "One time she was really fed up with Harry and Robert and she stopped, kicked them out of the car, told them to walk home and drove off," said Diane. "She drove just out of sight and then turned around. I think it scared us girls more than it did the boys."

With six children and a large medical practice, Dr. White enlisted the help of a housekeeper in the 1950's. Ethel M. Neketin kept more than the house, she kept order in the Rinehart household for ten years. "We couldn't pronounce the Russian name Neketim, so she was always Mrs. Ketin, and you didn't cross her," explained Diane. "She scared the gee-whiz out of me," added Patty. "She did so much for our family," both sisters agreed.

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# Rinehart Family Legacy of Community Care Continues with Dr. Dorothy White

When Dr. White returned from her internship in Minnesota, she was looking to purchase a home in Manzanita, and there weren't many options for her growing family. "She really wanted the house across from Pine Grove at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Laneda that is now Left Coast," said Diane. "But ended up buying a 4-plex unit that is now Ocean Inn." They remodeled it upstairs to accommodate three children, but soon outgrew the home. In 1949, the Rinehart family moved to the old schoolhouse, off Hwy. 101 just before the entrance to Manzanita. "It was the only home big enough for all of us," said Diane. "I was one month old at the time." The remodeling at the old schoolhouse utilized left over materials from a remodel at The Clinic. "We had the same linoleum and wallpaper as the clinic," said Patty.

Dr. White was very athletic, and was a championship tennis player. She enjoyed skiing, golf and rode horses. She kept her big family active, insisting on regular exercises. "She would get all of us to exercise with Jack Lalanne's program," said Diane. She liked to fish, too, and spent many evenings up the river fly-fishing with Dr. Beckwith. Her main hobby especially in her later years was her rose garden. When she moved to the



ways to keep the deer away, but she did grow beautiful roses.

1959 - Dr. White with children that she had delivered at the "new" Harvey E. Rinehart Memorial Hospital, and their mothers. We are trying to identify everyone in this photo. If you recognize someone, please contact The Rinehart Clinic office.



1960 — Staff at Rinehart Memorial Hospital examine a new cardioscope. From left: Erling Brauti, Dr. Harry Beckwith, Genevieve Smith, RN, Elmira Douma, Ella Rinehart, Dr. Irvin Schneider, Dr. Robert Chestnut and Dr. Dorothy White.

"She always said she was the same age as Jack Benny, 39," said Diane. "We didn't know how old she was for sure," added Patty. "Until we

were going through some photos after our grandmother died and found one that was dated of mother at a few days old, 1911." Dr. White was a founding member of the Rinehart Clinic Foundation which provided funds for indigent care and for scholarships for local students in the health care field. When she passed away in 2003, at the age of 91, there were many heartfelt stories shared at her funeral. Dr. White is remembered fondly and highly regarded for her compassionate care to all in our community.

