El Paso County Medical Society

Horseshoe Award

The significance of the horseshoe for El Paso County Medical Society.

The El Paso County Medical Society (EPCMS) was incorporated in 1879. The legacy of EPCMS began shortly after the city of Colorado Springs was founded by General William Jackson Palmer. The EPCMS articles of incorporation state the purpose of the organization is to "… engage in activities which promote the science and art of medicine, the betterment of public health, the unity, harmony, and welfare of the medical profession, and, to join with other county and district medical societies to form and maintain the Colorado Medical Society (El Paso County Medical Society, 1981)." Pioneer is a term used frequently to describe how Colorado Springs began, as General Palmer planned the physical aspects of the community to attract the wealthy along with artists, writers, and inventors (Mayburry, n.d.). Pioneer is synonymous with innovation. The community of the Pikes Peak region has a rich history of innovations, to include the drive for health due to the climate. Many people traveled to Colorado Springs with the hope the abundant sunshine and fresh air would cure tuberculosis.

The history of physicians as influencers of healthcare and the community weave through the community's archives. Many of the stories share the common thread of physicians passionate about the community. They express their passion through affording the gifts of their medical knowledge through conventional and innovative measures. Dr. Juan Angel del Regato, is the highly respected founder of the Penrose Cancer Hospital, administering state-of-the-art treatments (Navarro, 2019). Dr. del Regato came to the region by recommendation of Henri Coutard at the request of Julie Penrose, widow of the Broadmoor founder Spencer Penrose. Doctors, clinicians, and students from all over the country traveled to Colorado Springs to learn about cancer and radiology from Dr. del Regato.

Past EPCMS president, Dr. Lester L. Williams settled in Colorado Springs following his assignments during World War II as a decorated flight surgeon. Dr. Williams established his urology practice, then engaged in many organizations, most notably as Chief of Staff at Memorial Hospital and President of the Clinical Club. Dr. Williams was enthralled with the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) and took his appointment as Fire Department Physician seriously (Williams Fire Museum, n.d.). He authored many articles and papers related to the fire service. One area of interest focused on the hazards of smoke amplified through his engagement with CSFD encouraging the use of self-contained breathing apparatus.

Blacksmiths have used horseshoes for millennia. The horseshoe symbol is synonymous for pioneers of the frontier, to include the Pikes Peak region. The simple metal shape is also a lucky charm with stories dating back to the 900's of how the horseshoe was used to ward off the devil (Kentucky Derby Museum, 2014). Communities, like El Paso and Teller counties, are healthier because of the innovative spirit of the physician members of EPCMS. For EPCMS, the horseshoe is a symbol of appreciation for the tremendous contribution made to the community. The symbol brings the rich history of the community with the innovative spirit of physicians today in building a successful tomorrow. Of note, the horseshoe is upright, as the position has the lore to stay full with luck and protection.

EPCMS recognizes there are hundreds of physicians who have impacted the community through the medical society. Although not all are listed with their contributions, we genuinely appreciate their contributions, past and present.

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