

The Varian Radiation Therapy Student Scholarship



The Varian Radiation Therapy Student Scholarship Program was developed in honor of Eileen McCullough, B.H.S., R.T.(R)(T), FASRT. Eileen served on the ASRT committee that wrote the first radiation therapy curriculum,

published in 1964. McCullough was a 1949 graduate of Philadelphia Hospital's School of Radiologic Technology. In 1952 she went to work at the Oncological Hospital in Philadelphia as a super-voltage therapy technologist and in 1956 she was named chief radiation therapist.

To introduce the radiation therapy technology curriculum, McCullough published an article in the September 1965 issue of *Radiologic Technology*. "In recent years much attention has been focused on the training of the radiologist in therapeutic techniques," she wrote. "Unfortunately, in the United States the training of technologists has not kept pace. Now the need for well-trained assistants to therapeutic radiologists has become acute. It is distressing to learn that many of our leading radiologists are importing technologists and dosimetrists from England and Australia to secure the professional assistance they feel is needed."

Other countries had been quicker than the United States to establish formal educational programs for radiation therapists and U.S. hospitals establishing therapy departments were not shy in attempting to lure qualified foreign technologists to help develop their fledgling programs. At the time, on-the-job training was the only educational avenue available for most U.S. radiation therapists. By the early 1960s however, McCullough and a handful of other dedicated technologists were pushing for formalized educational programs.

In 1965, Ms. McCullough established the Philadelphia School of Radiotherapeutic Technology sponsored by a consortium of six Philadelphia hos-

pitals and in 1969 her program was the first to earn accreditation by the American Medical Association (AMA) Council on Medical Education.

McCullough's Philadelphia program, coming under the sponsorship of Gwynedd-Mercy College in 1975, developed one of the first two-year associate degree programs for radiation therapists. By the mid-1980s the Gwynedd-Mercy program was the largest in the country, educating more than 15 percent of all U.S. radiation therapists.

In recognition of McCullough's many achievements, she became the first recipient of the Varian Award for Achievement in Radiation Therapy Technology in 1984. Following her death in 1989, the award was retitled to include McCullough's name. The Varian Radiation Therapy Student Scholarship in honor of Eileen McCullough has replaced the award.



Sponsored by Varian Medical Systems in cooperation with the ASRT Education and Research Foundation



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