HOWARD UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON 1. D. C.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

January 18, 1950

Dr. Brian B. Blades
Professor of Surgery
George Washington University
College of Medicine
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Blades:

I am applying for Fellowship in the American College of Surgeons. I should like the privilege of using your name as one of the surgeons in my area who could vouch for my present surgical activities. I do not know the present attitude of the local Board of Regents. For five years before the acceptance of a Negro surgeon in 1945, I had waged a rather bitter battle with the American College of Surgeons, concerning the exclusion of qualified Negroes. I have purposefully waited for a period of time before making a personal application in this area, principally because I felt a little time was needed for some of the bitterness of our earlier discussions to have died down. I do not believe that there will be difficulty at this time since a number of men have been admitted from many ~~of the~~ sections of the country. I do feel it only fair, however, to mention this aspect to you. Our fellows have grown rapidly and well in Surgery out here at Howard University, and I feel that the further broadening influence of contact with the American College would be of tremendous help to them.

There is another problem which I should like to discuss with you at some time when you have a moment's leisure. It pertains to our eventual participation in the care of patients at Gallinger Hospital. Our Administration, as you might know, has been anxious to extend our teaching opportunities and our local Medical Society has for years carried on a fight designed to eventually create openings for our fellows on the Staff at Gallinger Hospital. When the proposition was placed before us in Surgery, we thought that our Staff did not have the depth or strength to take on any new undertakings. We have been attempting to strengthen it and give it more depth. At the same time, several of our students were appointed on the Staff as Interns. I have had no unfavorable reports of their activities in the Hospital, so I take this to mean that their work has been at least satisfactory and their presence has caused no unusual problems.

The next area, it seems to me, which needs to be explored is that in which a group of Assistant Residents might be tried out--one under the supervision of the George Washington Staff and one under supervision of Georgetown. It would give us and you, I believe, an opportunity to observe whatever problems would arise with men at this level. I do not think that we can much longer dodge the responsibility of assisting in the care of the indigents at Gallinger since, as I understand it, nearly ninety per cent (90%) of the patients are Negroes; nor will the powers that be, be free from criticism as long as there are no Negro Staff members.

I do not have the answers to the entire problem, but I should like to discuss it with you and get your slant on the situation as it exists at the present time.

Very sincerely yours,

Charles R. Drew, M.D.
Professor of Surgery

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