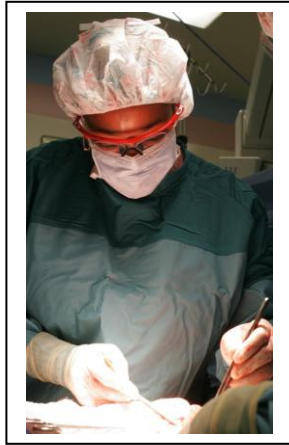


## DOORS: CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN AMERICAN ACADEMIC SURGEONS



Courtesy Sharon M. Henry, M.D. and Maryland  
Institute of Emergency Medical Services System

A collaborative effort between the  
National Library of Medicine  
and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland  
African American History and Culture in Baltimore.

The National Library of Medicine is the largest medical library  
in the world and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum  
is the largest African American museum on the east coast.

**Opening Doors: Contemporary African American Academic Surgeons** is an exhibition celebrating the contributions of African American academic surgeons to medicine and medical education. It tells the stories of four pioneering African American surgeons and educators who exemplify excellence in their fields and believe in continuing the journey of excellence through education and mentoring of younger physicians and surgeons.

Through contemporary and historical images, the exhibition takes the visitor on a journey through the lives and achievements of these academic surgeons, and provides a glimpse into the stories of those that came before them and those that continue the tradition today.

The four pioneers are Alexa I. Canady, the first African American woman pediatric neurosurgeon; LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., cancer surgeon, and the first African American President of the American College of Surgeons and the American Cancer Society; Claude H. Organ, Jr., general surgeon, and the first African American to chair a department of surgery at a predominantly white medical school; and Rosalyn P. Scott, the first African American woman cardiothoracic surgeon.

The exhibition also features other academic surgeons from around the country that follow in the tradition of sharing their knowledge and passing the torch to younger surgeons. These include Levi Watkins, Jr. of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine who performed the first implantation of an automatic defibrillator in a human in 1980 and Carla M. Pugh of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine who holds a patent for a method of simulation used to design the pelvic exam simulator, a teaching tool for medical students.

**Opening Doors** is not intended to be an encyclopedic look at African American academic surgeons, but is intended to provide only a glimpse into the contributions that African American academic surgeons have made to medicine and medical education. We hope that through this exhibition we can bring these stories to light and inspire others to pursue careers in academic surgery.

An online web version of the exhibition is also available at  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/aframsurgeons>

**Opening Doors** is currently touring around the United States. For more information, contact [nlmtravelingexhibits@nlm.nih.gov](mailto:nlmtravelingexhibits@nlm.nih.gov).

**Credit Line:** This exhibition was developed and produced by the National Library of Medicine and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture.

Curated by Margaret A. Hutto and Jill L. Newmark.

## Pioneers

African Americans have always practiced medicine, whether as physicians, healers, midwives or "root doctors."

Early black pioneer physicians like Charles R. Drew (right) and Daniel H. Williams not only became skilled practitioners, they became trailblazers and educators, paving



the way for future physicians, surgeons, and nurses, and opening doors to better health care for the African American community.



Dr. Daniel H. Williams



Dr. Matilda Evans (above), the first African American woman physician licensed in the state of South Carolina, founded the Taylor Lane Hospital in 1901, which eventually became St. Luke's Hospital and Training School for Nurses.

## Contemporary Pioneers

Academic surgeons not only exemplify excellence in their surgical fields, they believe in continuing the tradition of excellence through the education and mentoring of young physicians and surgeons.



Alexa I. Canady, M.D. is the first African American woman neurosurgeon and a retired professor of surgery at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI.

Claude H. Organ, Jr., M.D. was a general surgeon and the first African American chair of a department of surgery at a predominantly white medical school in Omaha, Nebraska.



Rosalyn P. Scott, M.D., is the first African American woman cardiothoracic surgeon. She is professor of surgery at Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine and Chief, Surgical Service

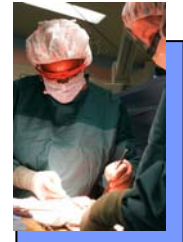
at the Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio.

LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., cancer surgeon and professor of surgery at Howard University in Washington, D.C was the first African American President of the American College of Surgeons.



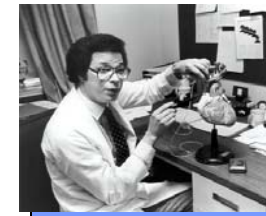
## New Frontiers

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C. and Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee were two of the few places available to African American academic surgeons. Today African Americans hold some of the most prestigious academic positions in the United States.



Dr. Sharon M. Henry is a trauma surgeon, associate professor of surgery, and chief of the division of wound healing and metabolism at the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore.

Dr. Henry became the first African American woman member of the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma when she was elected a member in 2000.



Courtesy Ebony Magazine

Dr. Levi Watkins is professor of cardiac surgery and associate dean of The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He is the first African American to hold these positions at Johns Hopkins.

In 1980, Dr. Watkins performed the first human implantation of the automatic defibrillator at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

## The Tradition Continues



Dr. Carla Pugh of Northwestern University holds a patent for an innovative teaching technique.

Today academic surgeons pave the way for a new generation of physicians and surgeons.



Transplant surgeon, Dr. Velma Scantlebury (left) with medical students at the University of South Alabama.

Dr. Kenneth Davis (right) of the University of Cincinnati practices suturing with a student.



Trauma surgeon, Dr. Edward Cornwell (left) of Johns Hopkins University with surgical residents at the University of Southern California.

Images courtesy Carla M. Pugh, M.D.; Kenneth Davis, M.D.; Velma Scantlebury, M.D.; Edward C. Cornwell III, M.D.

The National Library of Medicine and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture would like to thank the following individuals without whom this exhibition would not be possible:

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The National Library of Medicine  
8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, Maryland 20894  
301-435-5241

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland  
African American History and Culture  
830 East Pratt Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
443-263-1800

Exhibition web site at:

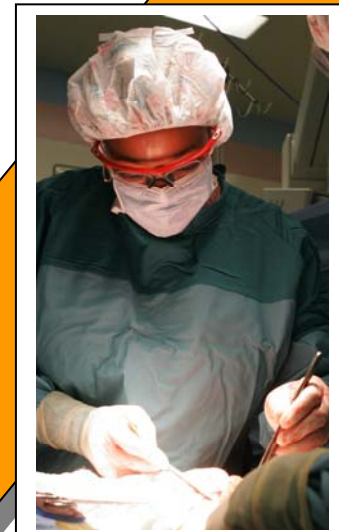
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd>



## OPENING DOORS:

### CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN AMERICAN ACADEMIC SURGEONS

A celebration of the achievements of African American pioneers in academic surgery and those that continue the tradition today.



Courtesy Sharon M. Henry, M.D. and Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System

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