

## Dr. Maureen Henderson, First Woman Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine, 1971-1975

Posted March 30, 2020

Written by Tara Wink, HSHSL Historical Collections Librarian and Archivist



*Dr. Maureen Henderson, Chair of Preventive Medicine, School of Medicine, 1971-1975. Image from Bulletin of the School of Medicine, 1972.*

Rounding out our celebration of Women's History Month 2020 is Dr. Maureen Henderson. Dr. Henderson joined the faculty at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) in 1960 as an instructor. She was born in Tynemouth, England in 1926 to Dr. Leo E. and Helen McGrath Henderson. She was a graduate in medicine and public health from the University of Durham, England.

After joining the UMSOM faculty in 1960, she earned the title of Professor of Preventive Medicine in 1968 and was named Chair of the Department in December of 1971. At the time, she was the first woman to hold the title of Chair at Maryland's medical school and one of few women chairs in schools of medicine around the country. As Chair, Dr. Henderson oversaw seventy faculty members across three divisions. Soon after accepting the title of chair, the department changed its name to the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine in 1974. The name change was a direct result of Dr. Henderson adding new expertise to the

department including the focus of Social Medicine and Public Health.

In 1975, Dr. Henderson resigned her position to accept a position as Professor of Epidemiology and Medicine as well as Associate Vice President for Health Affairs at the University of Washington. In 1983, she founded the Cancer Prevention Research Program at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, holding the position of director there until 1994. In 1997, Dr. Henderson was awarded the Order of the British Empire, the highest civilian award given by the British Government for her research in Cancer Prevention. She retired in 1998.

Dr. Henderson died December 4, 2012 in Seattle Washington. She was a world-renowned Epidemiologist and expert on cancer prevention but also studied cardiac disease, pregnancy complications, hypertension, and stroke.

Sources:

"Dr. Maureen McGrath Henderson." (2012). *Legacy.com* Obituary. Retrieved from: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/dr-maureen-henderson-obituary?pid=161519812>

"Social and Preventive Medicine." (1974). *Bulletin of the University of Maryland School of Medicine*. 59(4): 2-3. Retrieved from: <https://archive.org/details/bulletinofuniver5959/page/3/mode/2up>

"Woman Heads Department." (1972). *Bulletin of the University of Maryland School of Medicine*. 57(4): 16-17. Retrieved from: <https://archive.org/details/bulletinofuniver5757/page/n57/mode/2up>.