

FEATURE AT XIX

Kingsolver, wife Ginny, end nearly four decades of private practice

By Ann Shepherd

The Carlisle Mercury Staff

CARLISLE—When Wendell Kingsolver began his practice in 1954, he hardly had time to see a patient before he was drafted into the Navy Medical Corps.

But, fortunately, two years later he was able to return and resume his county practice— one that has lasted 36 years.

Kingsolver, a graduate of the University of Michigan medical school, said he anticipated the long hours demanded of a rural family doctor before settling in Nicholas County.

"I thought that I would be quite literally 24 hours a day, he said he was not to be surprised to find that he would be serving in a rural hospital.

At the time there were three rural communities, equipped with good hospital facilities, he said. Among them was Nicholas County.

"When I came in to settle here there were three other doctors and one other about my age, in 1954 that is. Shortly after I came, all three of the older doctors retired, leaving myself and another to care for the entire county as well as neighboring county patients. The Nicholas hospital served a very large area," Kingsolver said.

The pressures were often intense, he said. On several nights he got several calls for help or advice.

"On one particular occasion, I was called to the hospital early in the morning. Three women, all pregnant, went into labor at the same time. In the span of a half hour all three had given birth and I was a wreck," Kingsolver said.

Kingsolver describes the early 60s when he came into practice as the beginning of new era in medicine.

Previously, the role of the physician was as a comforter, he said. Some tools were available but treatments were limited. But it was not too much longer that a revolution took place, a watershed event that quite literally changed the face of medicine, Kingsolver said.

As vaccinations and new advances in medical treatments began to break a significant barrier in actual healing, more and more advances in the field developed so quickly it seemed they almost had to be, he said.

Specialization, especially as its origins during Kingsolver's term. At the time of his graduation medical advances were beginning to develop at such a rapid rate, general medicine was quickly becoming an archaic term. But Kingsolver said and many colleagues felt Family Medicine was, in itself, a specialty.

To compensate for the oversight, the Academy of Family Practice was formed, a unique specialty because of its post graduate requirements.

Africa, in terms of the extent and variety of illnesses, was not far removed from the problems found in Nicholas. He said. Aside from the various tropical diseases he had to be prepared to deal with, most illnesses were shared by both world regions.

A colleague of Kingsolver's from Michigan had urged him to come and help with the medical demands of the African nation and for years he refused because of his need to remain in Nicholas County.

"I explained that there was about one physician for every thousand people here and my time was literally too valuable to spend across the ocean. When I finished he said, 'You're the man, you're the ratio you are one doctor for every million people. It is an arrangement for leaving immediately afterward,' he said.

Through the Congo Protestant Relief Agency, the Kingsolver family flew from New York to Dakar.

Dr. Jenny Kingsolver took what tests that education need for one year of education but neither she nor the doctor knew what to expect when they arrived.

Kingsolver was taken to a village hospital that had never before had a doctor.

"When I say hospital, I mean they brought me to a room concrete building with a thatched roof. Few instruments were available," he said.

Medical supplies were delivered and Kingsolver immediately went to work treating as many as he could for malarial, he said.

On one occasion when a lion presented their own

hand of trouble for the Kingsolers. During one instance when the family was taking an evening walk, they had the impression something followed them but never saw anything.

"When we returned, people said they found among our own tracks the prints of an enormous lion. When lions get older and cannot get the speed to catch their common game, they begin stalking people because they are generally much easier to catch," he said.

"Their home was a most forbidding sight as well, Kingsolver said.

"When I began my practice, those who could pay for the services did and those who couldn't were taken care of for nothing or for some kind of token payment.

"I have been paid as much in eggs, ham, deserts, and other produce as I have been in money but I never became involved with medicine for the money."

"Certainly we have had a comfortable life and we have been able to pay for our children's education, but medical service is a community to people, in my primary motivation."

"We have been caught in a change that has created a rift between private enter-

prise and socialized medicine because of the soaring costs of hospital stays, medicines, and doctor's visits.

"In the future, though new technological advances will be found, physicians will have to face a philosophical decision. We have to redefine healing and appreciate care and determine. Recently we have

seen an extreme example of the need for this redefinition of medical values with the recent scandal surrounding the suicide murderings.

Following his retirement, Kingsolver has no intention of remaining idle. His services will be concentrated on helping run an indigent mental clinic.

After a one year stint in Africa, Kingsolver returned to Nicholas County with an entirely new perspective and appreciation for the advantages he had.

"No longer were my supplies meager or obsolete, but extremely luxurious and plentiful," Kingsolver said. The changes that have occurred to medicine's benefit, he said, have also had other problems in the way hospital care can be received and for better or worse, the next change Kingsolver finds for the medical profession is a philosophical one.

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GENERAL NEWS

Completion date approaches

Special to The Mercury
As a result of a lot of hard work by Sharpburg, Water District employees and board members, 14½ "Water District's Attorney Billy Huggins, Joyce Stephens of the Bluegrass Area Development District staff, both the Nicholas and Bath County Judge Executive offices, and the Water District's Engineer, the date is rapidly approaching when the Sharpburg Water District will receive permission to advertise the Nicholas-Bath waterline project for construction bids.



The Carlisle Mercury John Shepherd Photo
Spud Marshall, left, executive director of the Carlisle - Nicholas County Authority presented Jim Brown, president of the Bank of Carlisle with a flag, which had flown over the nation's capital. The flag was provided by U.S. Representative Larry Hopkins, and will be flown at the new branch of Depository Bank.

Prices effective Monday, June 18 through Sunday, June 24, 1990. We reserve the right to limit quantities, and to correct printing errors.

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