

The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston



The Kempner Chair in the Humanities in Medicine

Unlocking the "Art" of Medicine



Anne Hudson Jones, Ph.D. Literature helps physicians see why science must be balanced with the human element.

Literature and medicine. At first glance, these seem to occupy very different realms. Look deeper, however, and you'll see that, at their best, literature and medicine embody a common set of values and experiences.

Whether it's Robert Lowell recounting his hospital experiences in "Waking in the Blue" or Albert Camus' *The Plague* detailing a fictional pestilence in Oran, Algeria, literature illuminates our humanity in a way that has profound implications for health care training. In fact, a growing body of research suggests that people who read literary fiction are more empathetic and socially perceptive—exactly the qualities we look for in health care professionals.

Anne Hudson Jones, Ph.D., knows well the power of literature in health science classrooms. When she joined the faculty of the university's Institute for the Medical Humanities (IMH) in 1979, Hudson Jones was only the second professor of literature to hold a full-time appointment at a U.S. medical school.

"Many people in the university community—including some of my IMH colleagues—were puzzled about what I would do with literature in a health sciences setting," Hudson Jones recalled. "But most were remarkably open and welcoming. I was surprised at their willingness to invite me in, to give me opportunities to speak and engage with them."

Hudson Jones was appointed to the *Harris L. Kempner Chair in the Humanities in Medicine* in 2009. She has used distributions

from the endowed position to advance the role of and need for well-rounded curricula in health care training, to balance science with a human element.

In addition, Hudson Jones continues her exploration of the ethics concerning medical practice and research. She also examines narratives of mental illness and the state of graduate education in the medical humanities.

The Kempner Chair's impact even reaches overseas, helping fund Hudson Jones' work with colleagues in Switzerland. The Swiss are creating a national curriculum in medical humanities for the country's medical schools, as well as establishing an online database of French-language resources for the teaching and research of literature and medicine.

Hudson Jones said she is grateful for the support she receives from the Kempner Chair to help her shape the ethical policies of medical practice and the minds of tomorrow's physicians who are learning that the science and humanity of health care go hand in hand.

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"The Kempner Chair has allowed me to revitalize my research activities and international collaborations in ways that benefit not only my work but also that of the Medical Humanities Graduate Program," she said.

The *Harris L. Kempner Chair in the Humanities in Medicine* is one of 12 endowments that the Kempner family helped establish. Among others, the Harris & Eliza Kempner Fund was used to fund a School of Health Professions scholarship and create an endowment for breast cancer screenings. The Harris & Eliza Kempner Fund also made one of the lead gifts for the construction of the university's new \$438 million Jennie Sealy Hospital, which is scheduled to open in early 2016.

UTMB is most grateful for the more than 50 years of support given by the Kempner family and the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund.