

There is always a doctor in the Albert Allen House

Albert Allen, a physician in Selah, says the medical profession can't be handed down from father to son, or daughter, as perhaps the carpentry trade, but, nonetheless, counting his children, there is now an unbroken string of five generations of doctors in his family.

The trend started with Dr. Allen's great-grandfather, Arthur Nowlen, when he graduated from the University of Montreal as a physician in 1825.

It continues today with Dr. Loxi Marion Allen, an anesthesiologist in Yakima, and Doctor Paul Albert Allen, a physician in Richland.

Dr. Albert Allen still practices at his offices on West Orchard Avenue.

Arthur Nowlen came to the continent as an indentured servant to a person in Canada.

"Apparently they liked him enough to send him to medical school," Dr. Allen said.

Nowlen, of Scottish origin, practiced in an area of Canada that is now under the water backed up by a dam on the St. Lawrence Waterway.

He migrated to Ohio in 1850, moved on to Commanche, Iowa in 1853, to Morrison, Missouri in 1860 and Ames, Iowa in 1883, where he died in 1897.

His son, James Albert Nowlen, Dr. Allen's grandfather, graduated from Rush Medical School of Chicago in 1875. He practiced with his father in Morrison until 1883 when he went to New York for further study.

He returned to Morrison and retired there in 1917.

James Clare Nowlen, son of James Albert Nowlen, and uncle to Dr. Allen, was born in Morrison in 1895 and was educated a doctor of veterinary medicine.

He worked for the army veterinary corps in 1918.

Then came Selah's Dr. Albert Allen, whose mother died when he

was two months old. He was born in Carroll County, Illinois in 1918 but graduated from Morrison High School.

He later earned bachelor of science and M.D. degrees at the University of Illinois.

While still in school he received a commission in the Navy and, upon completion of school, served two years in the southwest Pacific Ocean, treating casualties from five naval landings in that area in World War II and other casualties as well. He was discharged in 1947.

Because of the death of his mother, his father's parents took the baby Albert Allen in, and there was no continued encouragement from the Nowlen family that led him to medicine.

Dr. Allen said he didn't have much contact with Uncle Clare to speak of, but he said he wanted to be a doctor from the time he was a little boy.

Dr. Allen grew up on farm and became a machinist apprentice at the Caterpillar Company after graduation from high school.

He continued education at night school while he worked, and a teacher who befriended him urged him to follow up on his dream. He got through the first years of schooling on his own work "waiting tables" and the last years from the work of his wife, who had finished her schooling before him and was now at work.

Medical school was a tough experience that Dr. Allen said doctors never forget.

"If I have a nightmare, I'm back in medical school," Dr. Allen said.

Another tough time was treating war casualties, but Dr. Allen said there was not time to get sick because of the carnage around him.

"You're the end of the line," he said. "You can't get sick. You're it."

And Dr. Allen said death of patients still bothers him even though he's been in the profession for years.

Dr. Allen said patients who have died have been patients a long time.

"They're my old friends," he said. "We've grown old together."

Dr. Allen noted the changes in the

medical profession have been vast since the time of his grandfather and great-grandfather.

For one thing, they could get medical degrees after two quarters of medical school, and there was no pre-med requirement.

"To graduate from high school at that time was unusual," Dr. Allen said.

Dr. Allen noted his great-grandfather "practiced out of his saddle bags," and that both is grandfather and great-grandfather traded services for chickens and potatoes "and those other little things you needed to eat."

Dr. Allen said some old books of his grandfather showed that an office call charge at that time was \$3 and that house calls were frequent.

However, he noted his grandfather saw as many patients in one week as Dr. Allen sees in a day in Selah.

Dr. Allen arrived in Selah in 1949 as the medical director and superintendent of the Central Washington Tuberculosis Hospital that today houses the Yakima Valley School.

Dr. Allen, who got experience in the field at a center in Springville, California, served in that capacity from the opening of the hospital in 1950 to its close in 1957.

"TB became treatable then," said Dr. Allen, noting that from the time he started in Selah to the time he was through, a TB hospital stay was shortened from two years to three months.

After the close of the hospital, Dr. Allen opened his internal medicine and chest diseases practice.

Dr. Allen said his joy of medicine was never concealed, often the topic of discussion at the dinner table.

That was the environment his children grew up in. He said he never encouraged their entry into the field and "told them everything that's wrong with it."

But as his son and daughter gravitated towards medicine, said Dr. Allen, he did all he could to support them, including going to the University of Oregon Medical School to make sure they were taking the right courses at the right

time.

Dr. Allen said both Paul and Loxi worked in his office and saw some of his medical work. He said Paul was there when he'd repair injuries for Paul's friends from school.

Dr. Allen's children were both born in Chicago, but they came west in time to be educated in the Selah schools.

They both graduated from Yakima Valley Community College in pre-medicine. Loxi took her third year of pre-med at the University of Washington and was accepted at the U of O Medical School, where she was the youngest member of her class and earned her B.S. and M.D. degrees.

She had accelerated her study by taking her first year of pre-med at YVCC while still a senior at Selah High.

Paul followed nearly the same route, accepted at the U of O

Medical School after a third year of pre-med at Oregon State. He too was the youngest of his class and earned his B.S. from OSU while earning his M.D. from the U of O.

Dr. Allen said he was more concerned with Loxi's decision to go into medicine because of acceptance problems for women.

"It's still a tough go for a woman," he said.

Dr. Allen said she turned out to be fortunate because in cases where partners were needed "kids asked to be her partner."

Before she embarked on the study, Dr. Allen said he told her he didn't want her to do it because she thought it would please him.

He probably could have said that to both his children without it making a difference.

There is something in the family line that says family members will be doctors.



Dr. Albert Allen

