

COMPELLING COMMENTS

The Rose of Dermatology

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Women serve a pivotal role in dermatology, accounting for more than half of residency spots as of 2015.¹ In the early 1900's, however, women were a minority within the field. The emergence of female dermatologists began with Rose Hirschler. Born in Butler, Indiana in 1875, Hirschler's journey into dermatology was a circuitous one. She trained to become a certified masseuse in Sweden before enrolling at the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia, graduating with her medical degree in three years.² After graduation, Hirschler worked with renowned dermatologist, Jay F. Schamberg. Schamberg was an important mentor for Hirschler. Together, they published several papers on various dermatologic conditions including lichen planus, lichen sclerosus, and syphilis.³

Hirschler began teaching at Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1900. She originally served as a gynecology instructor, but her passion for dermatology was not lost. In 1918, she became Acting Clinical Professor of Dermatology. Obtaining this position was a momentous step forward for women, as this was one of the earliest instances of women teaching women in dermatology.³ In 1936, Hirschler took another leap when she was appointed as chair of the Department of Dermatology, becoming the first female to do so.³ Additionally, Dr. Hirschler was the only female to contribute in

the founding of the American Academy of Dermatology. Hirschler's leadership was unprecedented, and the Department of Dermatology at Women's Medical College flourished under her leadership. Unfortunately, her tenure as chair was cut short as she fell victim to lymphocytic leukemia and passed away in 1940.³ To honor Dr. Hirschler, an award of her namesake, the Rose Hirschler Award, is given annually to female dermatologists who have made significant contributions to medicine and dermatology. Dr. Hirschler was a true pioneer for women in dermatology, paving the way for future females entering the field.

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