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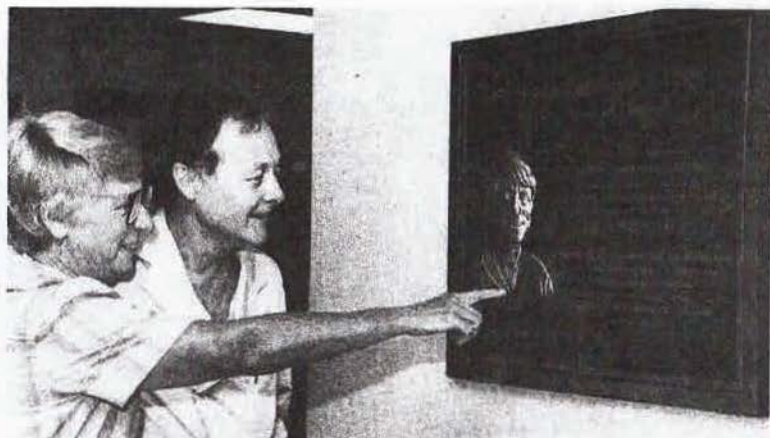


Photo by MERRIE MENDENHALL

Peggy Whalley, M.D., shows off her bronze relief image on a plaque in the new Parkland Memorial Hospital high-risk pregnancy unit to Norman Gant, M.D.. Whalley founded the original unit nearly 20 years ago.

## Pregnancy unit dedicated

By Ann Harrell

"Peggy's Palace" – the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology's high-risk pregnancy unit in Parkland Memorial Hospital – was dedicated Aug. 18 in ceremonies honoring its founder, Dr. Peggy Whalley.

Whalley, who recently retired from the department, started the high-risk unit nearly 20 years ago. It was one of the first such units in

the world. Whalley was the Jack Pritchard Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Southwestern Medical School.

In dedicating the high-risk unit, department chairman Gary Cunningham said that Whalley had dedicated it herself many years ago with her patients.

Peggy's Palace was first housed in what former chairman Paul MacDonald called "a dark hole" in

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### High-risk pregnancy unit

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a Parkland annex, which had earlier served as the hospital.

Whalley credited the idea for founding a high-risk unit to MacDonald. But the former OB/Gyn chairman credited Whalley's tenacity for the unit's success. In turn, Whalley praised the work of the nurses without whom, she said, "there would be no high-risk unit." She also lauded the efforts of the residents and the medical specialists who work in the unit.

Dr. Norman Gant, professor of OB/Gyn who has worked closely for many years with Whalley, said he "just got out of Peggy's way and let her work." He also admitted to having christened the unit "Peggy's Palace."

On a more serious note, Gant, also a former OB/Gyn chairman, said the whole department is proud of the unit for having provided "intensive care for almost 20 years, given by someone who cared intensely, Peggy Whalley."

Gant pointed out that the unit has saved not only countless human lives but also a great deal of money. At the time of the founding, the per-patient cost of the high-risk unit's premature babies, \$14 a day, was far less than the cost of care

for premature babies in the special care unit.

"Mother's a heck of a lot better incubator than the neonatal intensive care unit and a whole lot cheaper," Gant said. "Nature designed babies to stay in utero for 40 weeks." Because of the care received at Peggy's Palace, high-risk mothers – which include those with such problems as diabetes, high blood pressure or premature widening of the cervix – are far more likely to carry their babies to term.

More than 8,000 patients have been admitted to the unit since it opened in 1971.

Dr. Ken Leveno, an associate professor of OB/Gyn who has worked in the unit with Whalley since 1976, gave a 17-year progress report. "In the '70s the number of babies dying plummeted drastically because the unit had a major impact on the number of unborn babies who died," he said.

He also said that not only was Whalley special to him, but he was especially glad that her plaque would remain in the unit. Until the dedication and the installation of the plaque, the thousands of women and their babies who came to the unit for help have never known who was responsible for the care they received. ■