



Building Diverse Institutions

To continue to build on the dialogue of diversity inspired by the visits of Drs. Virginia Valian and Nancy Hopkins last year and by the recent visit of Dr. Haile Debas this year, Gladstone is pleased to welcome Dr. Joycelyn Elders, former U.S. Surgeon General.

Dr. Elders will visit Gladstone on **Friday, March 12**. Her visit will include a lecture entitled “The Challenges of Diversity: Health Care Education, Delivery, and Responsibility” from 1:00 to 2:15 p.m. at Carr Auditorium and a roundtable discussion at 2:30 p.m. where she will further discuss her life experiences and her tenure as U.S. Surgeon General. A late afternoon reception will follow at 4:00 p.m.

Throughout her career, Dr. Elders has dealt with many complex issues, including race and gender. When she entered the University of Arkansas School of Medicine in 1956, she was the sole woman in a class of one hundred and one of only three African-Americans. Outspoken and uncompromising, Dr. Elders was the first African-American and the first woman to serve as Surgeon General of the United States. She was also the first to be asked to resign.

As U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Elders argued for universal health coverage and was a spokesperson for President Clinton’s health care reform effort. She was a strong advocate for comprehensive health education, including sex education, in schools. She was candid and forthright in her views and was forced to resign after only 15 months as a result of a controversial remark about sex education.

The eldest of eight children, Dr. Elders never saw a physician before her first year in college. At age 15, she received a scholarship from the United Methodist Church to attend Philander Smith College in Little Rock, AR. Upon graduation at age 18, she entered the U.S. Army as a first lieutenant where she received training as a physical therapist.

Dr. Elders attended the University of Arkansas Medical School (UAMS) on the G.I. Bill. After graduation in 1960, she was an intern at the University of Minnesota Hospital in Minneapolis and did a pediatric residency and an endocrinology fellowship at the University of Arkansas Medical Center in Little Rock. She subsequently ascended the academic ladder to full professorship at UAMS. Dr. Elders also holds an MS degree in biochemistry.

Based on her studies of growth in children and the treatment of hormone-related illnesses, Dr. Elders has written many articles for medical research publications. She was appointed director of the Arkansas Department of Health in October 1987. While serving as director, she was elected president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers.

Nominated as Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service by President Clinton in July of 1993, she

was confirmed by the Senate on September 7 and sworn in on September 8. During the Senate hearings on her confirmation, Dr. Elders stated “I want to change the way we think about health by putting prevention first. I want to be the voice and vision of the poor and powerless. I want to change concern about social problems that affect health into commitment. And I would like to make every child born in America a wanted child.”

Currently, Dr. Elders is a Distinguished Professor of Public Health at the University of Arkansas. Additionally, she has been active in civic affairs as a member of the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, Northside YMCA, and Youth Homes. She was listed in *100 Outstanding Women in Arkansas*, *Personalities of the South*, and *Distinguished Women in America*. She has received numerous awards, including the Arkansas Democrat’s Woman of the Year, the National Governor’s Association Distinguished Service Award, the American Medical Association’s Dr. Nathan Davis Award, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women’s Candace Award for Health Science. She has also received multiple honorary doctorates of sciences and of letters.

Dr. Elders’ visit was organized in collaboration with the UCSF Center for Gender Equity. For information, contact Laura Napolitano (ext. 4814), Jutta Neuenburg (ext. 4840) Wendy Peters (ext. 2724), or Vanessa Soros (ext.4901).