

Octavia Garlington

Like No Other!



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Photo by Phil Jones, Augusta University

Thanks to the generosity of family, friends, students and alumni, the Octavia Garlington Medical Illustration Fund has been established with the Augusta University Foundation. Gifts to this endowed fund exclusively benefit the students in the Medical Illustration Graduate Program. For information about giving, please contact Sarah Akins at saakins@augusta.edu.

Emerita Professor Octavia Garlington

“Tavie” to her many friends, Octavia passed away peacefully on the afternoon of August 26th, 2021 at her home in Evans, GA. She was a member of the Class of 1961.

Octavia lived a truly remarkable life. It began with her birth in the Panama Canal Zone, through a long and storied career as a beloved teacher of medical illustration, that included decades of outstanding service in the profession. In retirement, she enjoyed pursuing interests in genealogy and the local arts community.

In the following pages, we celebrate Octavia—eager student, devoted teacher, insightful leader, trusted mentor, valued colleague and dear friend. It is no exaggeration to say that many of our alumni think of her as the very heart of our Medical Illustration Graduate Program.

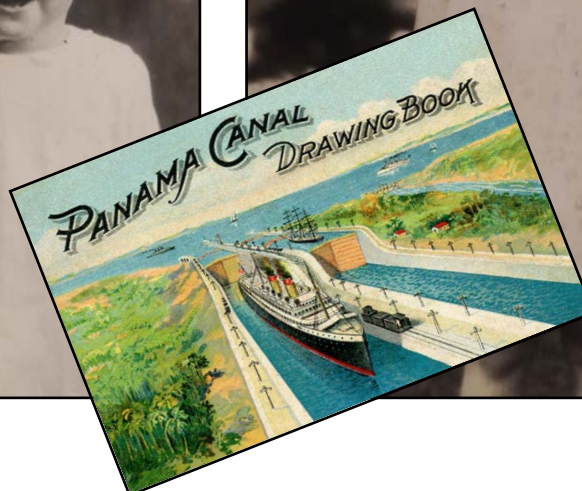
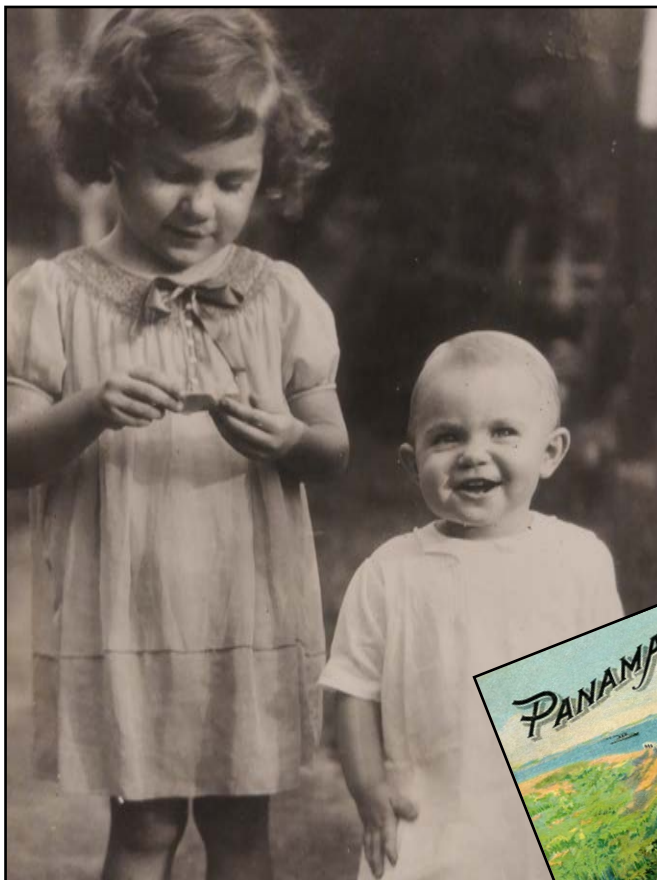
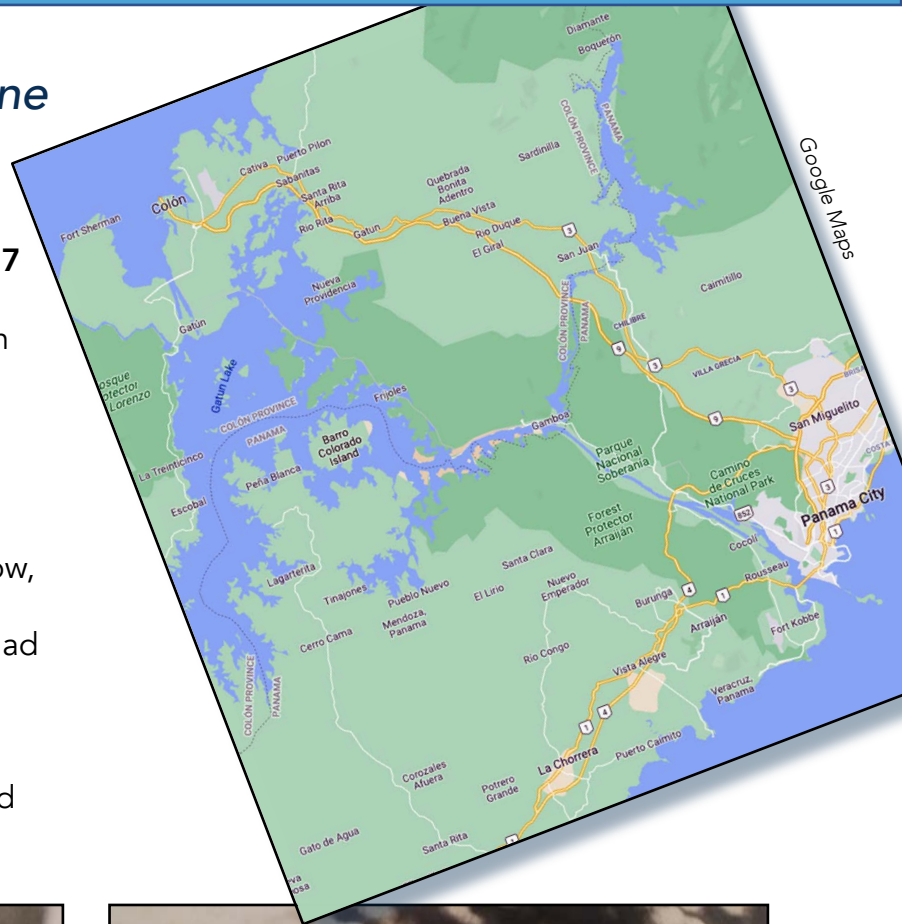
Octavia had, and will continue to have, a positive and enduring impact on medical illustration at Augusta University.

From the Panama Canal Zone

Octavia was born on April 26, 1927 to Albert "AC" Garlington, Sr. and Mary Wright Garlington. The family was living in Panama City, on the Pacific side of the Panama Canal Zone. Her father was an engineer involved in the building and operation of the Panama Canal.

In the photo with her big sister Alice, below, from 1928, we can see that Tavie had a precocious smile. By the age of four she had it perfected, as seen in the photo at right.

We will never know how Tavie came to be an artist, but she might have been inspired by the "Panama Canal Drawing Book."



Photos courtesy of Mary Neely

To Balboa High School



In the photo above, from the 1930s, we see Tavie on the left, her father AC, older sister Alice, mother Mary, and younger brother Albert Jr.

During WWII, Tavie attended Balboa High School, graduating in 1945. The photo at right was likely taken while in high school. After graduation she traveled north, to her ancestral home in Newberry, SC. She would soon be off to college in Spartanburg and a unique journey in education and teaching.

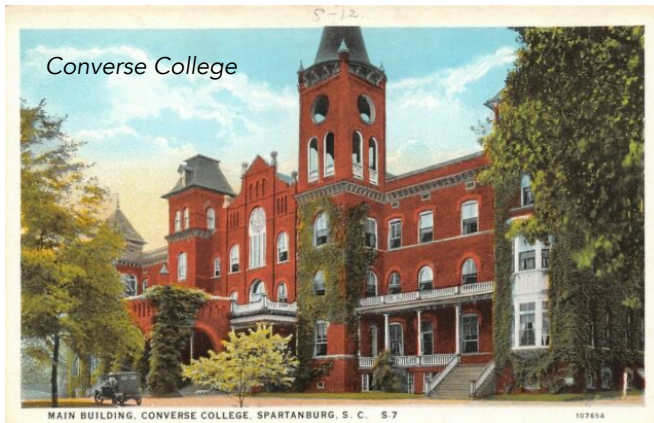
“Octavia was a gracious and kind lady, and it was always a joy to catch up with her.”

— Amy Piette Collins, '82



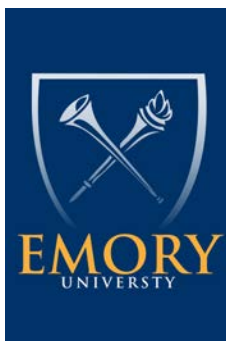
Photos courtesy of Mary Neely

Onward to College

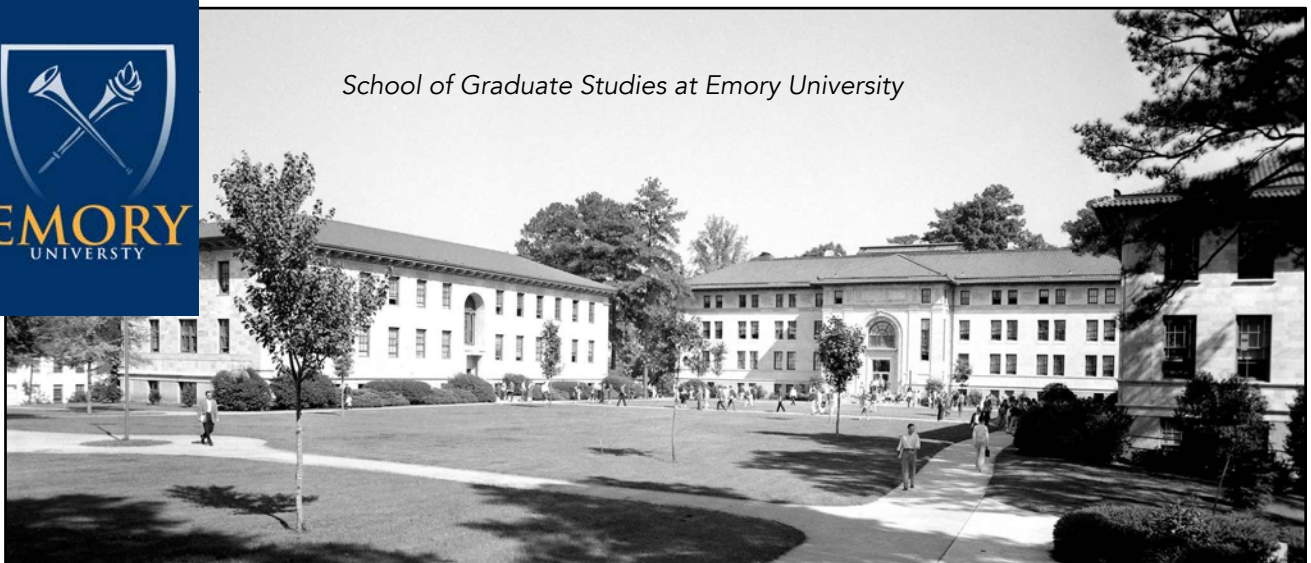


Octavia entered Converse College in Spartanburg, SC in the Fall of 1945. Converse was founded in 1889 as a liberal arts college for women—a good place for a bright and independent young woman with aspirations of a career in medicine. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, in 1949.

Next, she enrolled in the School of Graduate Studies at Emory University in Atlanta to pursue an interest in Library Science. She left Emory in 1951 to take courses in education at the University of South Carolina in Columbia.



School of Graduate Studies at Emory University



To Work at Agnes Scott College



Octavia moved to Decatur, GA in 1954 to begin a job at Agnes Scott College as an Assistant to the Dean of Students. She also audited courses in Art and Art History, nurturing a growing interest and talent in art.

In the summer of 1955, Octavia traveled to New York City for a course in television production at the NBC Studios at Barnard College, Columbia University. This training would be put to good use in a few years at MCG, with the Class of 1970, as seen in the photo below.

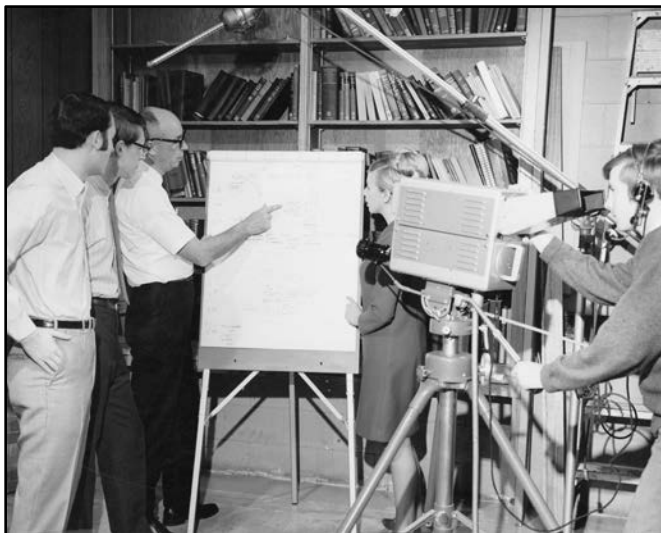


Photo by Tom Lanier, MCG

Octavia's interest in art at Agnes Scott College blossomed into a serious passion. In 1955 and '56, she enrolled in night classes in studio art at the Atlanta Art Institute. She worked hard at learning classical drawing and painting, with a goal of preparing her portfolio to apply to the Medical Illustration Graduate Program at the Medical College of Georgia.

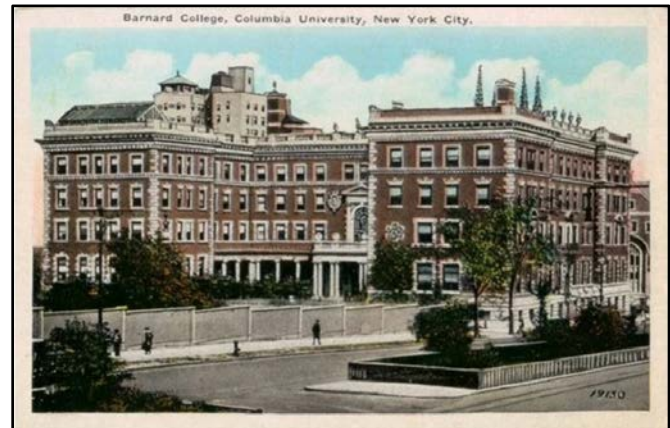


Photo by Tom Lanier, MCG



On to the Medical College of Georgia



Photo by Tom Lanier, MCG

Octavia arrived in Augusta in 1958 to join the Class of '61. Her classmates were Judy Mathewson and Peter Ng. The department was housed on the first floor of the nearly new Dugas Building.

"I am sure no one in our profession has felt more fortunate than I, ever since 1958, when I first set foot on the campus of the Medical College of Georgia and saw for the first time what I was getting into. As one who had been discouraged from trying for a career in medicine and, God forbid, in art, I couldn't believe my good fortune!" — Octavia Garlington, '61



Photo courtesy of MCG

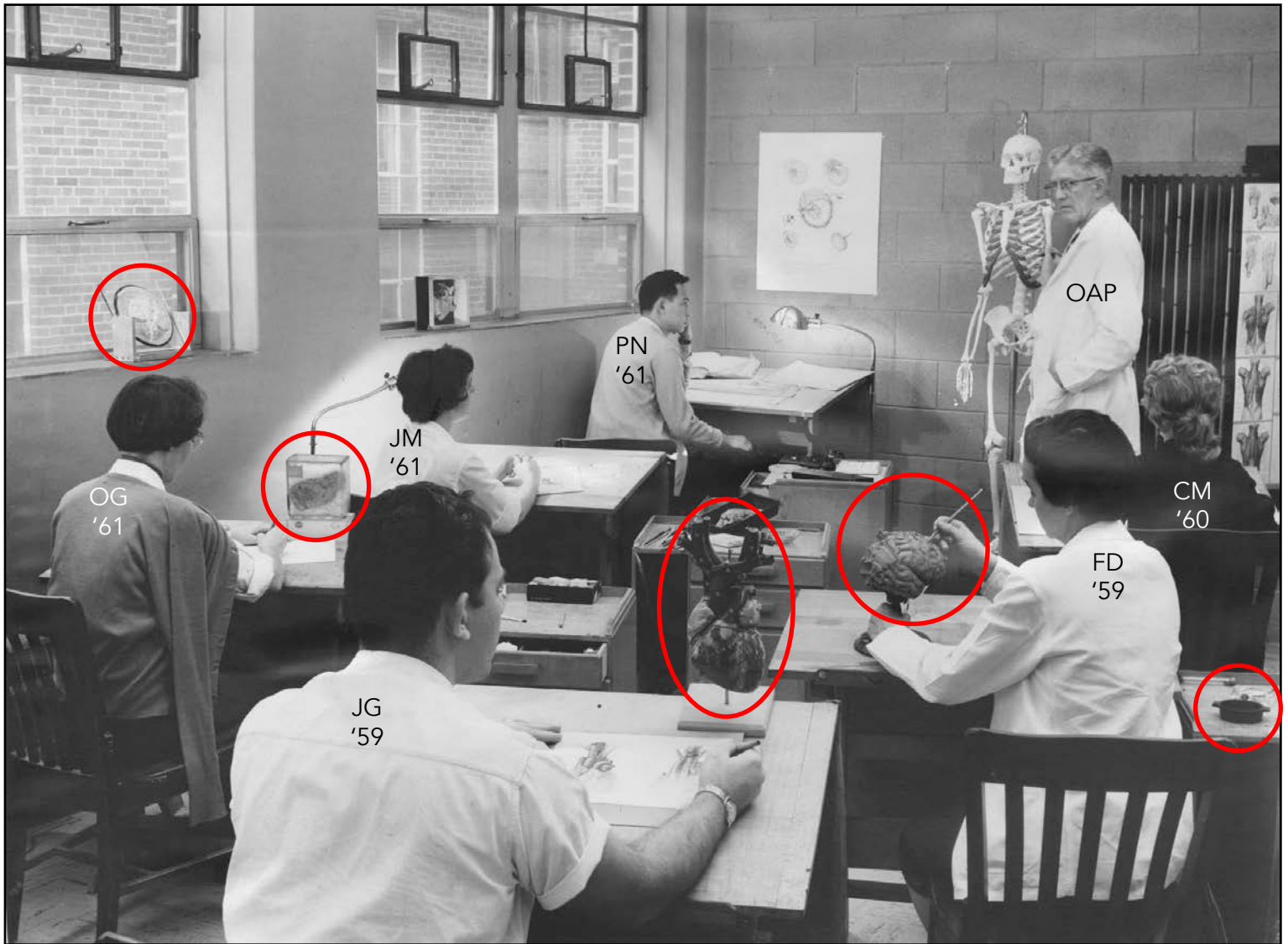


Photo by Tom Lanier, MCG

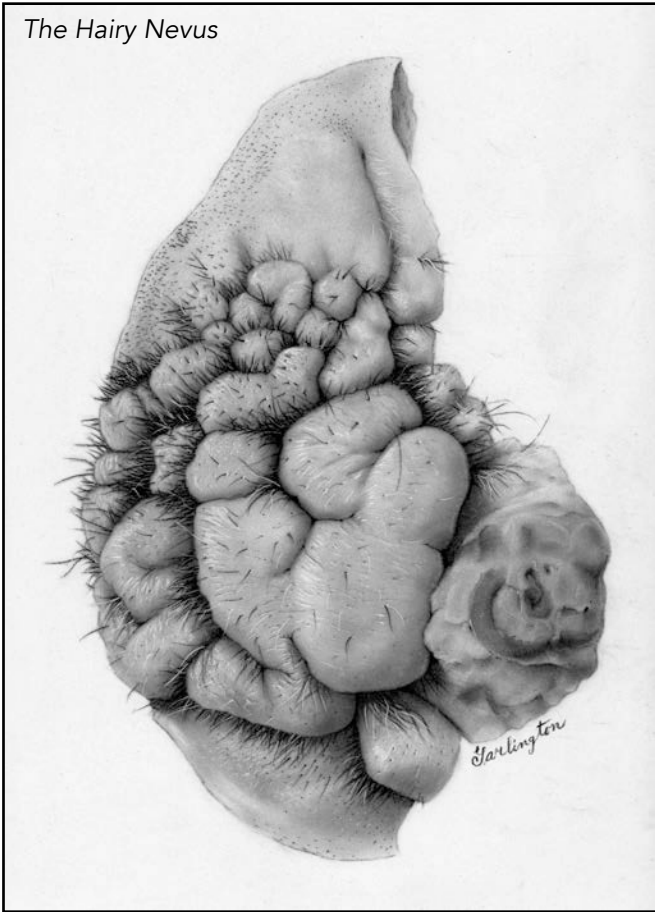
The Student Studio in the Dugas Building, 1961. Seen in the photo above are the members from three classes, including the Class of 1959: Jim Goodman (JG) and Frances DeRoller (FD). Cleone Morton (CM), Class of 1960, and Professor O.A. Parkes (OAP) are seen at right. The members of the Class of 1961 are seen at left, with Peter Ng (PN). Judy Mathewson (JM) and Octavia (OG).

There are a few artifacts worth noting in this picture. Starting at left, the "porthole" brain specimen, the tumor in a box on Octavia's

drawing table, and the *papier mache* heart on Jim's drawing table, all of which we still have in the department.

There are a couple of artifacts in the photo which we no longer have. The brain sculpture, that Frances is working on went with her when she went to work for Neurosurgery. And lastly, the ashtray. Yes, students really were allowed to smoke indoors and in class back in the day.

The Hairy Nevus



We don't know exactly when it became a tradition for our students to draw the Hairy Nevus, but Octavia sure rocked it. The original is 4x6-inches in size, and is executed in carbon dust with pen & ink details on Ross board.

When Octavia was a student, the Graphics Project served as the capstone to the academic experience. They were required to document surgeries in all the major fields and in a variety of media. Samples of her student work appear on the following pages.

“...the curriculum emphasis was on art techniques: carbon dust, black watercolor wash, pen and ink... Students were barely exposed to color art because full color art printed on letterpress was so expensive that there was little demand for it in institutional work”
—Octavia Garlington, '61

**THE APPLICATION OF
ILLUSTRATIVE TECHNIQUES
TO VARIOUS FIELD OF
SURGERY**

Octavia Garlington

195T

APPROVAL SHEET

The graphic project submitted by Octavia Garlington has been examined and approved by five members of the faculty of the graduate program.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the graphic project and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the graphic project is now given final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

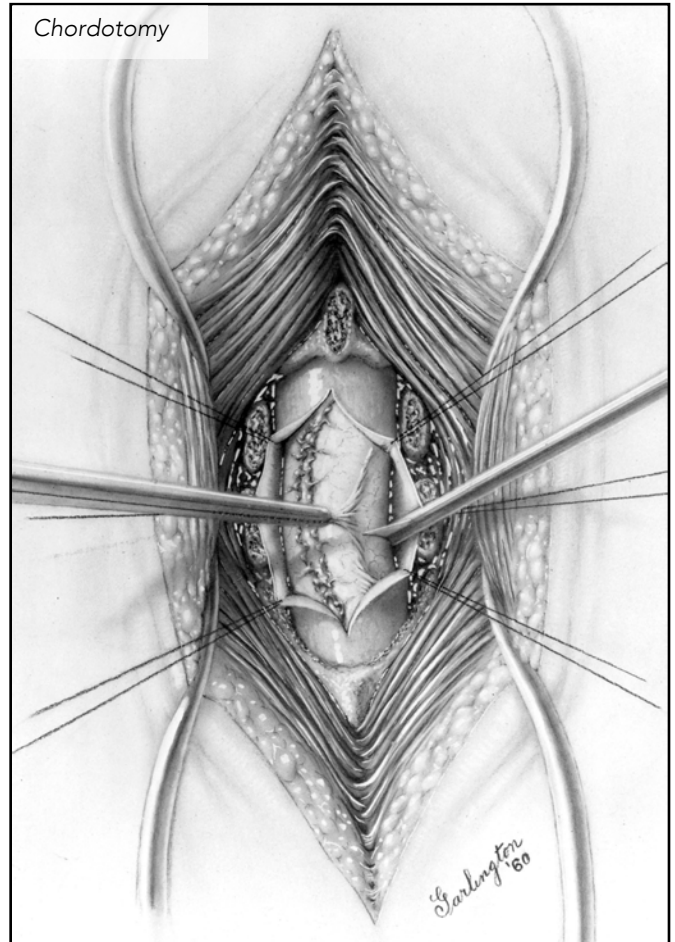
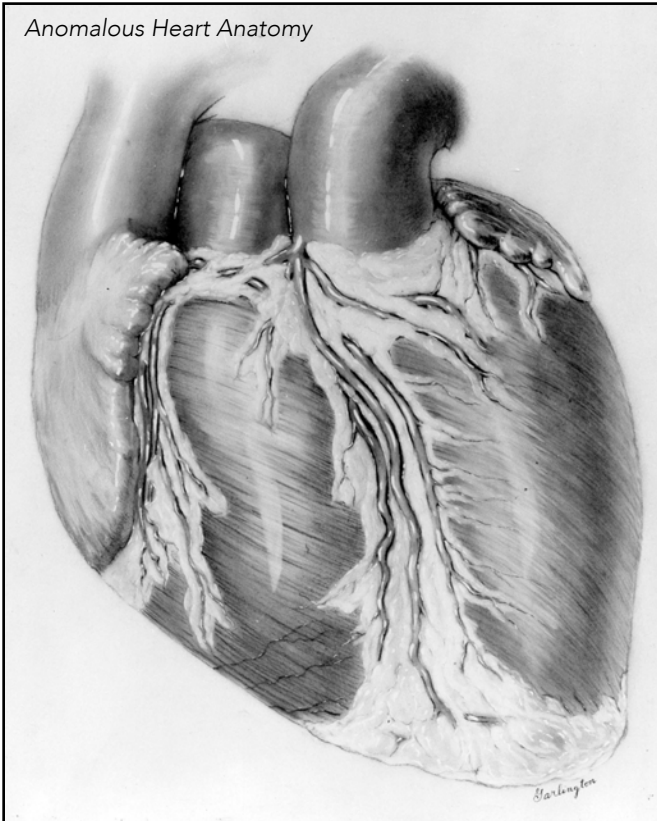
This presentation of the project is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Medical Illustration.

Date May 25, 1961 Signature of Advisor *Wille L. Peters*



Photo courtesy of MCG

In the photo above, the graduating Class of '61 are seen at center front.



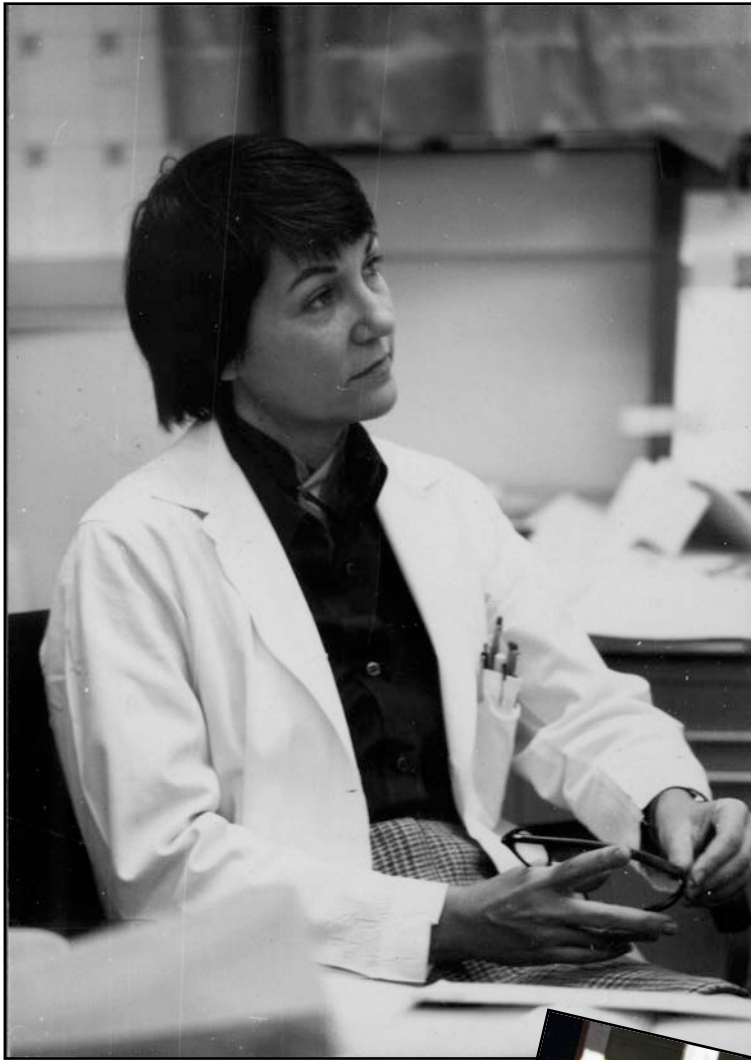


Photo by Tom Lanier, MCG

Octavia served as a Student Teaching Assistant during her third year in the program. She must have been really good at it, because when she graduated in 1961, Mr. Parkes asked her to join the faculty as an Instructor. She began teaching in July of that year and steadily rose through the ranks to become a full Professor.

“I remember the disappointment I felt when Mr. Parkes told me to erase the job title of ‘Medical Illustrator’ that I had proudly written on the employment form—a title I had just completed three years of study to attain—and replace it with the title of ‘Instructor.’”

“That job title kept me challenged and striving to live up to it for the next 30 years.” —Octavia Garlington

The early seventies must have been a challenging time to be a teacher in medical illustration, as evidenced by the photo below of the classes of '69, '70 & '71. During this period, Octavia developed an appreciation for single malt scotch.

The photo of the classes of '69, '70, and '71 at right was taken in the Frog Hollow neighborhood, adjacent to the medical campus. Seen standing, L-to-R: David Mascaro, Steve Harrison, Mary Brown, Ron Brandon, Mannie (Beckerman) Bekier, Karen Waldo, Don Biggerstaff, Bill Westwood, Bill Welch. Seen kneeling, L-to-R: Patsy Bryan, Jan Warner Sanders, and Nadine Karsh.



Service to MCG

- Designed faculty regalia, with Walter L. Shepard, MCG, '68
- The Graduate Council, School of Graduate Studies, '74
- Academic Council, School of Allied Health Sciences, '74-'79, '88-'90
- Academic Council, MCG, '75-'78
- Designed official flag for MCG, '84
- Dean's P&T Committee, School of Graduate Studies, '87-'89
- Institutional Self-Study Committee, MCG, '77-'79, '88-'89
- Dean's P&T Committee, School of Allied Health Sciences, '88

Faculty Advancement

- Teaching Assistant, '60 – '61
- Instructor, '61
- Assistant Professor, '66
- Associate Professor, '69
- Professor, '78
- Professor Emerita, '90

Administrative Leadership

- Chief of Art Services, Division of Biomedical Communications, '67 – '69
- Program Director, Dept. of Medical Illustration, '74

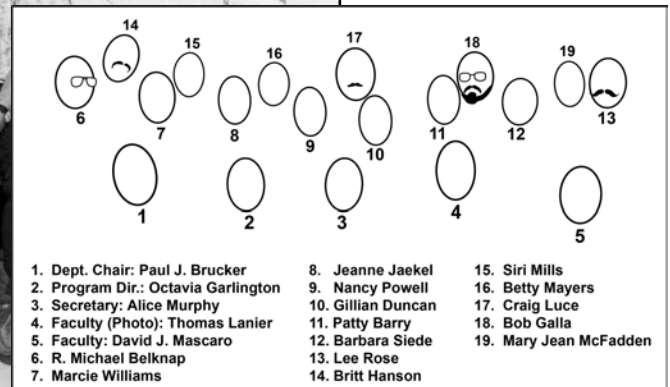
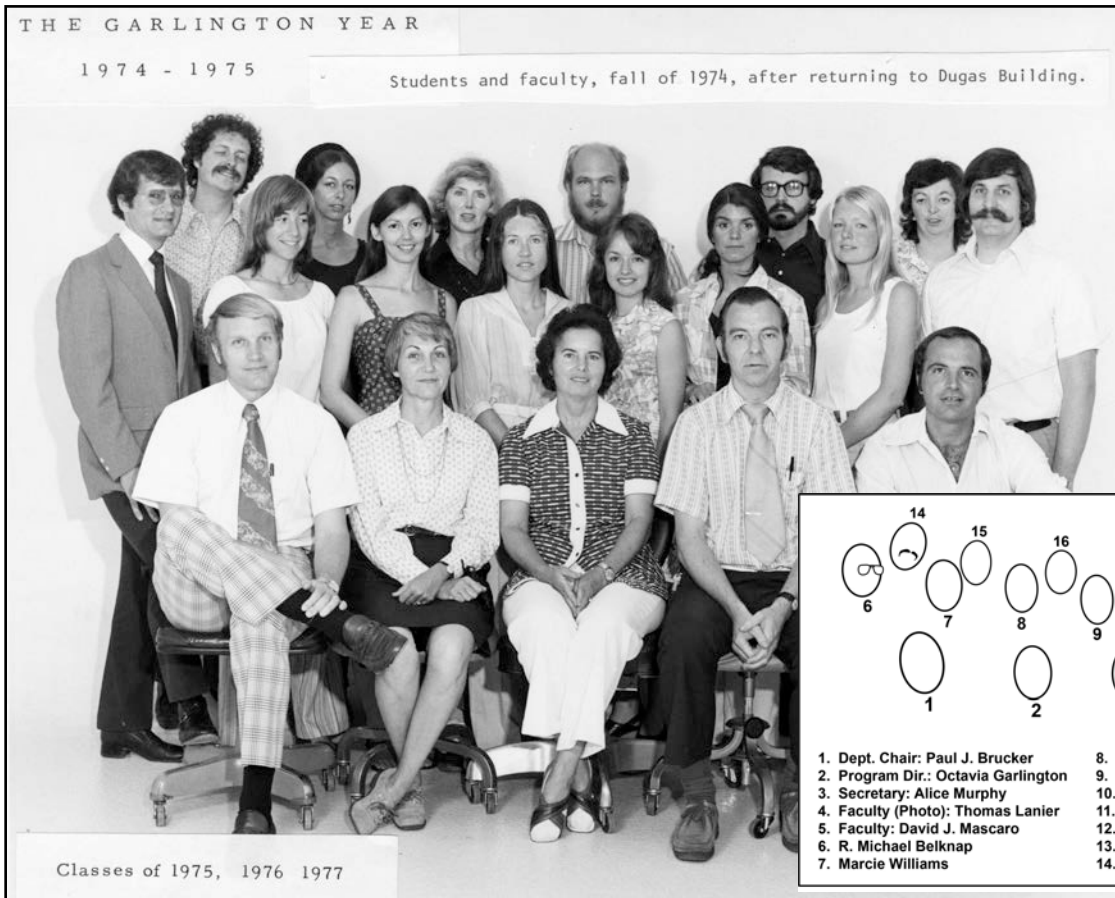




Photo by Phil Jones, Augusta University

When William "Bill" J. Stenstrom arrived in 1975 to serve as Program Director, Octavia resumed her full-time teaching duties. She continued, though, to oversee recruiting and admissions. She also found time to do a little PR. The photo above shows Octavia and Bill during Alumni Weekend in 2007.

"She was instrumental in my grad school education in so many ways."

—Allison Lucas Wright, '90

"She was such a great influence on me...and such a great and gracious person."

—John Hagen, '79

The Augusta Chronicle
The South's Oldest Newspaper—Established 1785
 Augusta, Ga., Monday Morning, November 6, 1978
 13A *

Octavia Garlington looks over drawing of student Lynn Siljegovic
Augusta Chronicle photo by Ricker Pittman

Medical illustrator program teaches student art, science

Lee Stapleton
Chronicle Medical Writer

There are medical students and there are art students, and usually, the twain never meet. The medical illustration program at Medical College of Georgia is a unique combination of the two divergent fields.

Students and faculty of the three year graduate program tout it as the "best in the country."

"The program's curriculum is a rigorous mixture of medical science and art. First year students attend classes with medical students to learn the basics of the human body, and how it functions. During the next two years, the students study anatomy in a variety of ways. "Second year students are required to observe surgery once or twice a week," said Octavia Garlington, assistant director of the program, and a graduate of the first class of medical illustrators from MCG in 1952.

Stenstrom said for some specialty areas, such as ophthalmology, students have direct examination contact with patients.

The medical training the students receive is coupled with instruction in the use of a variety of artistic mediums. Stenstrom said a great deal of medical illustration is done with paper and pen, but the medical illustrator must also be knowledgeable in the use of clay, plastics, plaster of paris and other materials that lend themselves to three-dimensional displays.

Miss Laurien was a pre-med major at Duke University in North Carolina when she decided medicine was not for her.

"I didn't want to spend 11 years of my life studying to be a doctor, but I wanted a career that would afford me access to medicine," Miss Laurien said.

"This is fun, yet not everyone can do it," she said.

Lynn Siljegovic, 26, said, "A lot of doctors and hospitals don't realize we exist. They think they can do it themselves or have their third-grade daughter who draws do it."

Continued from Page 13A

Illustrators combine art and science

"We try to challenge them with the most accurate, detailed work, so when they leave here they'll feel comfortable doing almost anything," Miss Garlington said.

"Them," refers to the six or seven students a year accepted to the program.

Between six and eight hundred inquiries a year are received from people interested in the program. A brochure is sent detailing the mixed background in art and science and the high grade-point-average required to be considered for the program.

Miss Garlington estimates of the people receiving brochures, 60 to 80 send portfolios of their work. A committee examines the work, and decides whether the people have enough talent to be considered. About 40 applications are sent, and these people are interviewed. Of them, six or seven will be chosen to be trained as medical illustrators.

"I think most of us are artists who like borders, starting with an end product in mind," Miss Garlington said.

"We would not be successful if we dressed and acted like artists. The discipline is stifling," Stenstrom said.

Stenstrom and Miss Garlington said the field of medical illustration encompasses more than doing pharmaceutical company advertisements or drawing for medical textbooks.

Many medical illustrators work for research groups, or work in a situation where their work will be used for educational purposes, such as at MCG.

Leslie Laurien, 23, hopes to work for a research group when she graduates. "I'd look to do something that involves a great deal of operating room time and that will keep me current in the medical field."

See ILLUSTRATORS, Page 14A

She was More Than a Teacher

Octavia was there for the students—

As a group or individually, whether it was renting a spare bedroom to someone far from home or helping a student nurse an orphaned puppy, Octavia was always willing to assist. Like the time she helped Gillian Duncan ('77) make a popcorn cake for her wedding to Michael Belknap ('75), in 1977.

"She was always available to discuss our work and give fair critiques with helpful suggestions whenever needed. Always an inspiration, her beautiful smile lit up the room wherever she was." —Charles Boyter, '74

"Living with Octavia for two years made being so far from home bearable." —Carolyn Bledsoe Holmes, '90



Pen & ink by Steve Harrison

"Back in 1981, she was coordinating ...and overseeing the interview process. I recall visiting ... her office in the Dugas building. She greeted me as she greeted all, with a warm smile and a diligent presence...moving me through answering questions and orienting me to the program. A tour of the studio, a drop by to meet Bill Stenstrom, and finally a meet-up with David Mascaro. All the while her warm presence ushering me through the process. I recall vividly all the emotions of that day. To see those students in that studio and knowing only a small number of applicants would make the final cut and be invited to join the program. Unsettling, and yet awe inspiring. It was Octavia that made it all seem possible. It was Octavia that made me feel as if I were home."
—Greg Swayne, '84



Octavia

The Bride

Mikki
Senkarik

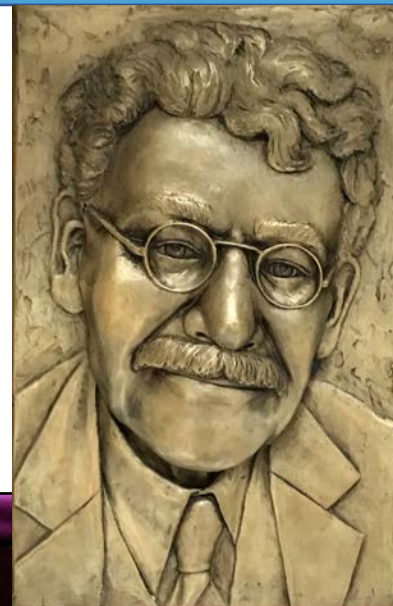
Service to the Profession

Octavia believed in service. She belonged to numerous professional groups, but her heart belonged to the Association of Medical Illustrators (AMI). Her history of dedicated service is exemplary, and included:

- Corresponding Secretary, '64-'73
- Vice-President, '75
- Board of Governors, '76-'81, '85-'90
- Chair, Membership Committee, '76-'80
- Chair, Manual of Procedures Committee, '77
- Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors, '77, '87
- Judge, Professional Salon Committee, '84
- Editor, Membership Directory, '85-'88

Octavia also received many awards and honors during her career, including:

- Outstanding Service Award, AMI, '73 & '80
- Elected to Alpha Eta Honor Society, '76
- Outstanding Faculty Award, Allied Health Sciences, MCG, '77
- Distinguished Service Award, MCG, '84 & '85
- Fellow of the Association of Medical Illustrators, '88
- Distinguished Alumni Award, Allied Health Sciences, MCG, '04
- Brödel Award for Excellence in Education, AMI, '07
- Ranice Crosby Distinguished Achievement Award, Art as Applied to Medicine, Johns Hopkins Univ. '90



Bas relief from the Brödel Award for Excellence in Education and the medallion for the Ranice Crosby Distinguished Achievement Award.

“I was a direct beneficiary of her thoughtfulness. I remember that she was in charge of the portfolio committee in 1977, when I applied for membership. I was terrified that I would be rejected immediately. Before the official announcement, she saw me in the hallway (no idea how she knew who I was) and came up to congratulate me and compliment my work. I was so moved.”

“If we each had a fraction of the class and kindness Octavia had, the world would be a better place.”
—Sue Seif, Johns Hopkins program alum and member of the Georgia Program National Advisory Council.

“What an amazing woman she was!”
—Beth Boardman Grant, '88

“Octavia was a remarkable and inspirational woman.”
—Lynsey Steinberg, '12

Emerita Professor



At left, Octavia during a History of Medical Illustration at MCG seminar. Photo by Bill Andrews. Below, L-to-R: Charles Boyter, Octavia Garlington, Bill Westwood and Bill Andrews. Photo by Vicki Andrews

Octavia was an active and engaged Emerita Professor in Medical Illustration for nearly 30 years *after* she retired in 1990. As part of our new student orientation, we held a History of Medical Illustration at MCG seminar, and Octavia was always the featured guest. She'd regale the newbies with tales of carbon dust drawings and Mr. Parkes' cigarette with the dangling ash. At some point she would give a sly grin and recount how she used to love critiques, and how she would ask the students "Is this finished?" But perhaps the most memorable Octavia-ism was, "Say, that's nifty." You knew you were doing something right if she said that to you.

"I literally just told my students yesterday that they were doing 'nifty' work. I can remember Octavia telling me that once." —Gene Wright, '90



"Octavia was a very special person, and all of us graduates have nothing but fond memories of her."
—Bill Poinsett, '65

"She was such a nice lady." —Alex Webber, '95

"I have such fond memories of her."
—Nancy Henn Marshburn, '84

Alumni Weekend 2007



Photo by Phil Jones, Augusta University

Octavia was truly like no other.

Many notable faculty and students have passed through the doors of the Dept. of Medical Illustration. Some were there for just a couple of years, and some were there for most of their career. Few made as great an impression—as both student and teacher—as David Mascaro and Octavia Garlington. It is said that if we see farther, it is because we stand on the shoulders of giants. David, Octavia, and Bill were some of our giants.

“Rest in peace sweet lady.”
—Judith Glick Ehrenthal, '73

“Three of the most influential people in my life... David Mascaro, Octavia Garlington, and Bill Stenstrom. I'm thinking of them, my time at MCG, and the remarkable imprint they had on me and on a generation of talented, yet aspirational young people.” —Greg Swayne, '84

“Oh Octavia! I will miss you every day... You were a giant, and the one that helped us all through the program.” —Bill Winn, '67

“She will be greatly missed.” —Russ Edwards, '94

“This truly marks the end of an era, and a remarkable life.” —Emily Craig, '76