

# Looking Back: TMA's Historical Archives

With a long history of medicine in Texas, stories like that of Beadie Eugene Conner, MD, and his uncle George S. Conner, MD – Black physicians practicing in the Jim Crow South – are captured in the Texas Medical Association’s archive and distilled in the association’s History of Medicine Gallery and other historical resources.



Beadie Eugene Conner, MD

**SHARING** those stories beyond the walls of the gallery, TMA’s traveling exhibit, “Courage and Determination: A History of African Americans in Medicine,” offers insight into how, as medical facilities shifted from small offices to large groups, Black physicians were excluded. As the exhibit notes, Dr. George Conner recalled paying a \$75 fee, more than \$1,700 in today’s money, to operate on one patient in Waco in 1939.

But Dr. Beadie Conner, the senior Dr. Conner’s nephew, would not be stopped from practicing good medicine. By 1938, he was leading his own office in Austin, one of more than 200 Black-owned proprietary clinics in the nation at the time, historians estimate. Dr. Conner’s clinic moved twice, from San Jacinto to East 12th to its final home at 1415 Rosewood Ave. – all predominantly Black neighborhoods. Relics of that clinic, including an early portable electrocardiograph and various medications, are now stewarded in the TMA archive.

“Courage and Determination” also recognizes Dr. Conner’s work in opening the Holy Cross Hospital, the first medical facility in Austin to employ Black physicians and treat Black patients. When the hospital relocated, it was Dr. Conner’s advocacy and relationship with then-Rep. Lyndon B. Johnson of Austin that secured needed state and federal funds to rebuild, resulting in the iconic architecture pictured on the banner, now honored with a historical marker.

Dr. Conner retired in 1979 as a school physician at Huston-Tillotson University, a historically Black institution, and passed away in 1994.

Learn more about TMA’s traveling banner exhibits at [texmed.org/history](http://texmed.org/history). To reserve one, email or call the TMA Knowledge Center at [knowledge@texmed.org](mailto:knowledge@texmed.org) or (800) 880-7955. Each one measures approximately 6 feet by 3 feet and comes with a retractable stand that makes assembly easy. Banner production and shipping costs are possible thanks to a generous grant from the TMA Foundation.

Sources: Roberts Clinic National Register of Historic Places Registration Form; Bramble, Kali. “On the Verge of Demolition, Neighborhood Seeks Recognition for Holy Cross Hospital.” *Austin Monitor*, 14 Jan. 2025.

Items from Dr. Beadie Conner’s clinic now stewarded in the Texas Medical Association archive include, clockwise from top, an EPL Cardiotron portable electrocardiograph machine, and bottles of Gelusil liquid antacid and Harvey tablets for liver disorders.

