

B. Olive Cole Class of 1902

First Lady of Maryland Pharmacy



Dr. B. Olive Cole, known as the “First Lady of Maryland Pharmacy,” blazed a trail of outstanding services and “firsts” that few women have matched. Among her many unique accomplishments, she was the first woman to receive a law degree from the University of Maryland School of Law; the first female Acting Dean of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy; the first woman to hold a full professorship at the School of Pharmacy; honorary President of the Maryland Pharmacist Association, honorary President of the Alumni Association of the School of Pharmacy, a recipient of the Honored Alumnus Award, and the only woman member of the Baltimore Veteran Druggists Association.

Born in Mount Carmel, Baltimore County, she graduated from Franklin High School in Reisterstown in 1902.

Dr. Cole began her career as a stenographer with the Baltimore pharmaceutical manufacturer of Sharp & Dohme, which eventually became the world famous firm of Merck Sharp & Dohme. As a result of her work, her interest in pharmaceuticals led her to enter the University of Maryland where she earned the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy in 1913.

From 1916 to 1920 she was employed as a pharmacist in Washington. In 1920, she joined the staff of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, serving as Secretary of the faculty for more than a quarter of a century, from 1920 until her retirement in 1953. From 1948 to 1949 she served as Acting Dean of the School of Pharmacy. In addition, she taught botany, materia medica, economics and pharmaceutical law.

Dr. Cole was a life member of the Maryland Pharmacists Association, the American Pharmaceutical Association and a charter member of the Epsilon Chapter of Lambda Kappa Sigma pharmacy sorority. She served as President of the Baltimore Branch of the American Pharmaceutical Association of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. She was also a charter member and past President of the Quota Club International.

The B. Olive Cole Pharmacy Museum was established by the Maryland Pharmacists Association in Honor of Dr. B. Olive Cole, Professor Emerita of Pharmacy Administration, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy.