

# Medical pioneer still sees patients daily

By ANNETTE KEUNING  
Staff Reporter

In his office at the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre, Arthur Shears shuffles his chair and talks animatedly about his work.

It's the same enthusiasm he has brought to that work as founding medical director of the Halifax-based centre and a pioneer in the field of rehabilitation medicine.

As the centre's driving force for more than three decades, Dr. Shears has watched it become a leading treatment, teaching and research facility and is currently overseeing a major expansion.

But its medical director still sees patients every day — including two days a month in his Cape Breton hometown — and continues the life-long work that has made him one of Nova Scotia's best-known doctors.

"Under his leadership, not only are bodies rebuilt, but so too are patients' spirits and self respect," said a patient at the centre, in presenting Dr. Shears

for an honorary degree earlier this month at Acadia University.

Born in 1924 in Glace Bay, Dr. Shears worked for 14 months in the same coal mine, now closed, that employed his grandfather and father.

His future was closely tied to events in the busy mining town. "I always admired the family doctors of Glace Bay at that time. They were good family doctors, but they also looked after a lot of mining injuries," he said in an interview, squeezed in between patient appointments.

He studied at Acadia and Dalhousie universities, earning a medical degree from Dalhousie in 1950, and began a practice in family and industrial medicine in Glace Bay.

But treatment limitations sent him back to school after just two years. "I saw some severely injured patients, and although I could fix and patch them up, we didn't know what to do after that. Nobody in the province did."

After specialty training in



WW/Pittman

## Dr. Arthur Shears

Toronto and Boston in the emerging field of physical medicine and rehabilitation, which traces its history to helping the war injured, Dr. Shears returned to Halifax and started the rehabilitation centre in a few rooms of an old hospital building.

"In the beginning, I just set out to do the training to be a better physician," he says of the centre's founding in 1956. "But it soon become very apparent we needed facilities."

The centre moved after 21 years to its current Summer Street location, increasing to 52 beds from 19. By this November, it will have grown to 104 beds.

"We knew we needed 104 beds from the beginning," says Dr. Shears, noting a long in-patient waiting list. "That will improve very considerably when we open our beds this fall."

Thousands more people have been seen as out-patients. People assisted have ranged in age from six months to 100 years, with conditions ranging from problems with the spine or limbs, strokes, amputations, spinal cord injuries, brain injuries and other types of disorders of the brain and nervous system.

The centre is the main base for Dalhousie University Medical School's division of physical medicine and rehabilitation, where Dr. Shears and the centre's 10 other medical staff members teach. He also founded Dalhousie's School of Physiotherapy in 1963 and served as director until 1975.

# Doctor's semi-retirement ends era of N.S. medicine

By Dale Madill

STAFF REPORTER

An era in Nova Scotian medicine ended Friday when the man who pioneered rehabilitative medicine here officially retired from his duties as director of medicine and chief physician at the centre he founded in 1956.

"I will be a full-time, active member of staff at the rehabilita-

tion centre, a consultant to other hospitals and a full-time consultant in my own practice," Dr. Arthur Shears said Friday. "I just don't



■ Arthur Shears

have the administrative responsibilities anymore."

Dr. Shears founded the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre in 1956 in a few rooms of an old hospital. Two decades later, the now 104-bed centre moved to its current location on Summer Street. "I just felt it was time for a change in my personal life," he said. "I would like a little more time with my grandchildren, plus the fact we have trained a large

cadre of specialists, younger people who develop their own way of doing things."

Dr. Shears, an Acadia University graduate, earned his medical degree at Dalhousie University, and returned to his home in Glace Bay to practise. It was there he recognized the need for rehabilitation services.

"Some patients I saw in ... Glace Bay made me wonder if something more could be done. I investigated and found out there were things being done in other places at the time, so I went to study."

After studying in Toronto and Boston, Dr. Shears established the Halifax centre, which treats injuries ranging from strokes and amputations to spinal and brain disorders.

"My greatest satisfaction has been the large number of people that we have been able to help at the centre," he said. "The reward is seeing the progress of persons who have illness or disability recover from some of the consequences of it."

**Next week: An interview with Dr. John Sapp, the centre's incoming medical director.**

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# Devoted service

It is a magnificent building which now is the home of the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre. Formally opened a few days ago, it represents the dedication of many individuals and it gives promise of even greater accomplishments in a field already distinguished by the fine quality of the work that has been done.

A quarter of a century has passed since there first was talk of a rehabilitation centre for this province. Four years later, in 1956, Dr. A. H. Shiers instituted the program with which he has been associated ever since.

From the beginning, the undertaking was housed in an older building on University Avenue in Halifax. The quarters were to have been temporary but a score of years elapsed before the new and long-dreamed-of facilities were ready.

If the former housing was less than adequate, the fact was not evident in the quality of the ministry performed. Perhaps the limitations constituted a challenge. In any event, the staff made the very best of what was at its disposal and, through the years, blessing was bestowed upon a veritable army of afflicted persons.

Throughout, the wise, patient

and capable leadership of Dr. Shiers has been a most significant factor. It was a well-merited tribute which was accorded him when, with the opening of the new centre, a plaque was unveiled in his honor.

At the same time, the program has enjoyed the support of a number of truly concerned individuals. It is noteworthy that the board of directors has enjoyed the contributions of members who have given long periods of service. They have, indeed, to use a common phrase, stuck with it through thick and thin. The chairman, Lloyd Caldwell, has given vastly of his time and talent. Space does not permit the congratulatory comments that are deserved but the names stand out of such as Don Curren, G. R. Matheson, William Greenwood, Michael Eames, Frank Kernaghan, John McCaul, R. K. Murrant, and H. R. Hemming. They and their associates have placed the people of this part of Canada very deeply in their debt. It is an illustration, once again, of the value to a community of the interest and concern of those who voluntarily serve.

The Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre has brought new strength and healing to many. As it occupies its new home, it is with the promise that good works shall be even better.

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**MEETING HELD** — Members of the Canadian Paraplegic Association held their annual meeting on the H. M. C. S. Scotian recently. Back row, from left, are Richard Greening, association treasurer; Dr. Arthur

Shears; Ozzie Henderson; Mayor Ron Wallace; Allan Green, association chairman; front row, from left, Don Curren, association secretary; Joan Young; and Ken MacRae, past chairman. (Wamboldt-Waterfield)