

## Dr. Jamal Karam Harfouche

**A pediatrician whose life has  
been a glowing achievement.**

When Jamal Karam received her medical degree in pediatrics in 1941, she was the first woman doctor from South Lebanon, her birthplace being the resort village of Jezzine. Although a number of Lebanese women have obtained medical degrees and have practiced medicine before and since, Dr. Karam Harfouche deserves special mention because she has gone far beyond the mere practice of medicine.

She came from a family of five boys and two girls; except for the elder daughter who married young, the children were able, in spite of limited financial means, to gain university educations and occupy leadership positions as university professors and government officers. Jamal was an outstanding student at Sidon Girls' Secondary School, the American Junior College and the American University of Beirut.

Besides her private practice in pediatrics from 1943-46 and from 1950-58, she was a professor in the School of Medicine at A.U.B. In 1958, she received a fellowship from the World Health Organization (WHO) for the study of Public Health at Harvard University, where she earned a degree in Social Medicine and Hygiene in 1959 and a doctorate in Public Health in 1965. Her new specialization opened new areas for her in active service. She became chairman of Community Health Practice, School of Public Health at A.U.B. from 1964-1975, professor of Maternal and Child Health from 1967-1977, Professor Emeritus of Maternal and Child Health in 1979. She has also been advisor to many local and international organizations, including the WHO, to which she has been advisor and consultant since 1968. She has held presidencies and vice-presidencies of several health committees, among which is the Executive Committee of the International Union for Child Welfare; and she was the founder of the Lebanese Union for Child Welfare, the Lebanese Society for the Physically Disabled and the Federation of the Non-Governmental Agencies in Lebanon.



Besides this prolific activity, Dr. Harfouche has done valuable research work in her areas of interest, published 33 books and articles and presented several papers at various occasions. The topics treated in her research are: Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning, Growth and Development, Experimental Work in the Delivery of Health Care at the Primary Level, Clinical and Social Pediatrics, Community Health and Development.

Her achievements have attracted the attention of national and international organizations, which have honored her with awards and prizes, some of which are: The Golden Merit of the Cedars; the Research Grant, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland; Grand Prix Humanitaire de France; Said Akl Prize and the Award of the Lebanese Association, "Friends of the Book".

When asked about the secret of her steadfast success, she emphasized the encouragement of family and friends, her faith in herself, her optimism and her indefatigable energy. These qualities are well reflected in the genuine smile which illumines Dr. Harfouche's face and never fails her even under stress and difficulty.