

Recognizing Tulane trailblazers on National Women Physicians Day

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Dr. Elizabeth Bass (left) and Dr. Edith Ballard (right) were the first women faculty members to be appointed at Tulane University School of Medicine.

National Women Physicians Day is held every February 3 to remember the trailblazers in medicine and honor the female doctors of today. Two women were the first to break the gender barrier at Tulane University School of Medicine. In 1911, [Elizabeth Bass, MD](#), and Edith Loeber Ballard, MD, became the first women faculty members at Tulane, opening the door for generations of female physicians and students who would follow.

Before their time at Tulane, Bass and Ballard helped establish the [New Orleans Hospital and Dispensary for Women and Children \(later Sara Mayo Hospital\)](#).

Founded in 1905, this was a location where women physicians could use their skills

to provide medical care to other women and children of the city who had limited means.

Bass taught at Tulane for 30 years, served as president of the American Medical Women's Association from 1921-1922, and even founded its New Orleans group. Bass retired in 1941, but due to a shortage of doctors during World War II, she became the house physician at the Jung Hotel in New Orleans. In 1953, Bass was honored with the [Elizabeth Blackwell Centennial medal](#) from the American Medical Women's Association. A [collection of materials](#) from her career is available to view in the [Rudolph Matas Library of the Health Sciences](#).