

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **A 'HEN MEDIC' AT LSU MEDICAL SCHOOL**

### ***Library to present insider's look at 1930s New Orleans***

**NEW ORLEANS, LA--***The Courtship of Two Doctors: A 1930s Love Story of Letters, Hope & Healing*, by former journalist Martha Fitzgerald of Shreveport, recreates the era when women medical students were a curiosity in Louisiana and a grand new Charity Hospital was under construction in New Orleans.

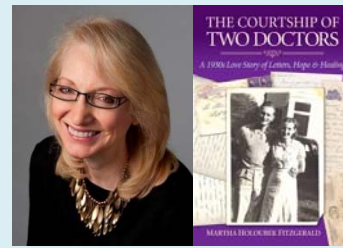
The award-winning book of letters, a blend of medical history, social history, and romance, draws on the two-year correspondence of Fitzgerald's parents, Alice Baker of Louisiana and Joe Holoubek of Nebraska, who met as medical students. Roughly half the letters are datelined New Orleans.

Fitzgerald will discuss "Charity the Beautiful and Hen Medics: An Insider's Look at 1930s New Orleans Medicine" at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, September 28, at New Orleans Public Library, 219 Loyola Ave. The program is presented by LSU Medical Alumni Association and the New Orleans Public Library. Dr. Alice was one of the first women to graduate from the New Orleans medical school.

*The Courtship of Two Doctors* (Little Dove Press, 2012) earned silver finalist honors for biography/autobiography from New Generation Indie Book Awards and for book design from the Independent Book Publishers Association.

Through *Courtship*, readers encounter the scandalous overcrowding of New Orleans hospital wards before opening of the new Charity. They also experience the social and cultural barriers challenging women in medicine and two-career marriages.

Alice Baker, the daughter of a staff physician at Veterans Hospital in Alexandria, Louisiana, found most sexist slights amusing. She shrugged off teasing from classmates, confusion from patients, and some outright hostility. But



#### **NEW ORLEANS LIBRARY**

*Martha Holoubek Fitzgerald will speak at 10 a.m. Saturday, September 28, at New Orleans Public Library, 219 Loyola Ave.*

*Topic: "Charity the Beautiful and Hen Medics: An Insider's Look at 1930s New Orleans Medicine."*

*Presented by LSU Medical Alumni Association and the New Orleans Public Library.*

#### **OTHER APPEARANCES**

**BATON ROUGE:** *Book signing, 2-4 p.m. Saturday, October 15, Barnes & Noble at LSU, Baton Rouge. At the campus bookstore on Highland Road, preceding the LSU-Florida football game.*

she did take umbrage when a visiting dignitary disparaged women medical students in general and Charity Hospital in particular.

“I personally wish he hadn’t come,” she wrote of Dr. Morris Fishbein, editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. “He picked out the female sex to insult and—well, he made every girl who listened to him furious. Not content with belittling our mental capacity, he informed the group that one only had to look around even in a medical class to see how women wasted money on cosmetics.”

What was worse, he berated conditions at Charity Hospital, where Alice planned to intern.

“However, as long as I’ve known anything about it, Charity has been in a terribly crowded condition. Even before they tore down the old hospital building, there have been patients two in a bed or sleeping on the floor. So I can’t understand the sudden commotion now when they really have an excuse for it.”

Dr. Alice and Dr. Joe married in 1939 and began their lives together in New Orleans with fellowships at LSU. They relocated to Shreveport after World War II and entered private practice of internal medicine.

Proceeds from book sales benefit LSU School of Medicine in Shreveport, which Dr. Joe co-founded, and a Diocese of Shreveport marriage ministry. Fitzgerald serves on the board of LSU Health Foundation of Shreveport.

“This charming book is replete with enough medical references to interest any student of medical history,” said *Library Journal* (October 15, 2012). “Other readers will fall under the spell of the music, automobiles, and social mores of the 1930s.”

“I met Martha Holoubek Fitzgerald at the recent Louisiana Book Festival,” wrote columnist Cheryl Dastugue Coen (*Louisiana Book News*, November 11, 2012), “and was impressed with her dedication to her parents ... Fitzgerald researched not only the 800 letters but background medical sources, archives and historical records.”

Fitzgerald, an award-winning journalist of 27 years, served as a columnist and associate editorial page editor for the Shreveport *Times*. She is now an independent editor and writer through Martha Fitzgerald Consulting ([marthafitzgerald.com/](http://marthafitzgerald.com/)).

Fitzgerald has placed an annotated edition of the complete letters collection in medical archives in New Orleans, Shreveport, Omaha, and at Mayo Clinic, where Dr. Joe and Dr. Alice met in 1937.

Learn more about *The Courtship of Two Doctors* at [www.littledovepress.com](http://www.littledovepress.com).