



FRANCES J. STORRS, M.D. R '68

By Harry Lenhart

**Frances J. Storrs, M.D. R '68**, professor emerita of dermatology and an OHSU legend, is also an avid gardener. “She’s almost a professional plant collector,” said James E. Rasmussen, M.D. R '73, a former student and a gardener himself.

For these dermatologists, gardening is a bit more than an avocation since plants are the source of many allergens that cause contact dermatitis, which each of them has spent careers studying and treating.

But it is Dr. Storrs who is known worldwide for her work in contact dermatitis and the discovery of new workplace and environmental allergens. She is author or co-author of more than 100 studies in peer-reviewed journals. She has been showered with nearly every award her specialty offers, among them the Gold Medal of the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), its highest award.

The first woman to complete a residency in the OHSU Department of Dermatology, Dr. Storrs has been a strong and effective advocate for women in her profession.

Yet it is Dr. Storrs the teacher and mentor whom generations of OHSU students and dermatology residents celebrate. Almost every teaching and service award OHSU offers has been bestowed on her.

That’s because she’s cultivated and nurtured learners with much the same passion she gives her plants – and virtually everything else she tackles.

“Her students and friends are devoted to her, and it’s because of the energy and enthusiasm she radiates for everything she’s a part of,” said **Diane Baker, M.D. R '75**, a Portland dermatologist and former president of the AAD. “She has an amazing capacity to motivate students to do their best.”

“She was relentless at questioning,” recalled **Peter Schalock, M.D. '02**, associate professor of dermatology at Harvard Medical School. She might ask a patient the same question four different ways, he said, as a means of teasing out the information necessary to diagnose contact dermatitis.

For years, groups of medical students met once a month at her house for dinner. “Nearly all the women among them,” said Dr. Storrs with pride, “became dermatologists.” A couple of them even got married at her house.

“Her lasting legacy,” concluded Dr. Baker, “is her effect on the lives and careers of her many students. We can only hope to live up to the example Fran has set in her life as a physician and friend.”

Nominate teachers and mentors who have had an impact on you for our “Lasting Legacy” column. Reach us at [alumni@ohsu.edu](mailto:alumni@ohsu.edu).