

Dr Winifred E. Hadden MD DPH (1894-1960)

Winifred Eileen Hadden was born in 1894, only daughter of Dr W. E. Hadden and Mrs Rachel Hadden (nee Robb) of Portadown. She attended Friends' School, Lisburn, and Oakfield School, Arnside, in the Lake District, England. In 1920 she graduated with MB BCH at Queen's University Belfast, and she took her DPH in 1922 and obtained her MD in 1935. After qualification she went into practice with her father.

Dr Winifred Hadden was a founder member of the local Association of the Medical Women's Federation and an active member of the Co. Armagh Welfare Committee since its inception in 1947. She was also a member of the South Western Special Care Management Committee. She sponsored and supported the Council of Social Services, giving much of her time to its many interests after its inception in the early 1940s. In 1956, she was appointed to the Child Welfare Council of Northern Ireland and served on its Executive Committee. Her range of interests was wide and she acted as Honorary Secretary of the Committee on Psychological and Spiritual Healing of the Methodist Church in Ireland since its formation.



Outside the practice of medicine, Dr Hadden was interested in and supported the Portadown Musical Festival Association. This Association, which began in 1922, is a movement which has been proudly preserved through the last 98 years. From a Festival of forty-one classes in the Music section, initiated by Winifred and her mother in 1922, it has grown to a total of 510 classes devoted to the present five different sections, namely: Music, Speech, Drama, Irish Folk Dancing, and Dance, with well over 8,268 competitors extending over 42 days during February to May each year. Winifred was Honorary Secretary for some years.

Another of her interests was the Portadown Soroptimist Club, which she helped to establish and of which she was Founder President in 1944. Winifred served on more than one occasion as President and took an active role in all of its activities, including raising awareness of many issues affecting women and girls in the local area.

Leading a very active and useful life, both as a Medical Practitioner and as a Soroptimist, Winifred was always keenly interested in many new developments both within and without medicine. A woman with a keen social conscience and one who espoused fairness and equality, she was instrumental in helping to start the town's first nursery school, and to establish a family planning unit at the local health centre. She had a personal gift of being a helpful advisor with a quick understanding of people's problems.

Winifred was not merely a family doctor, she was a friend to all her patients. When she saw that people were in need, she tried to help them in any way she could, irrespective of class or creed. It has been said that:

"Hers was the vision to see what could be done and to get it started".

An outstanding woman in every way. Sadly, Dr Hadden died suddenly on 4 May 1960.