

DR. TAUSSIG AT 66: AS BUSY AS EVER

'Retired' Woman Physician Is Doing Research

BALTIMORE, Dec. 19 (AP)—Helen Brooke Taussig grew up in an age when some people said it didn't pay to educate women—they just got married and had babies.

It paid to educate her, however. Her work has helped save the lives of hundreds of babies, and saved thousands of others from deformities. She herself never married.

Dr. Taussig, who is 66 years old, retired last year after 33 years as physician in charge of the Cardiac Clinic of the Harriet Lane Home of Johns Hopkins Hospital. However, she has not retired from working, or from fighting.

Honors continue to come to her. Last July she received the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award the nation bestows in peacetime. Next year she is to become president of the American Heart Association, the first woman to head the group in the 40 years it has existed.

Dr. Taussig is now fighting for medical care for the aged under Social Security—in opposition to the American Medical Association—and against a proposed trolley line and museum near her home in the Lake Roland area.

She has received the Thomas Rivers Memorial Distinguished Fellowship and will use the \$40,000 for research. The grant expires when she is 70, but the most Dr. Taussig will acknowledge is that while "you don't stop at 70, you begin to slow down."

The lean, tall New Englander began her work here in 1927. Before that she studied at the Cambridge (Mass.) School for Girls, spent two years at Radcliffe, was Phi Beta Kappa at the University of California, and did research at the Boston University School of Medicine.

In 1944 came achievement and honor. Dr. Taussig and the late Dr. Alfred Blalock perfected "blue baby" surgery.

A "blue baby's" bluish tinge is caused by a malformation of the heart that results in an oxygen deficiency and death. The development of the surgical technique for correcting this defect is considered a milestone in cardiovascular research.

Dr. Taussig has decided to use part of the fellowship for a follow-up study on "blue babies" who were operated on 15 to 20 years ago. Tracking down the former patients, however, has been a problem.

"People don't travel 10,000 miles across country just to tell you they are doing fine," she says.

The doctor is also doing research on the relation of vi-



CONTINUES RESEARCH:
Dr. Helen Brooke Taussig.

tamin D to certain types of heart-valve disease and mental retardation.

In addition to her work on the heart, Dr. Taussig is an authority on the effects of drugs on unborn children. She was one of the first to alert the American medical profession to the dangers of Thalidomide, a drug that caused thousands of deformed babies in Europe.

For Federal Assistance

Having served on numerous governmental committees, Dr. Taussig does not share some physicians' fear of Federal interest in medicine.

"There are a great many things that require the financial support of the Federal Government to carry out," she said.

Private groups and the Government must cooperate, she said, with the Government following the "guidelines of the private sector." The great feature of the American system, she continued, is that "we have voluntary agencies and can serve in the way we feel most needed—it isn't dictated arbitrarily from above and we all work together."

"Everybody enjoys feeling he can contribute," she declared. "It is one of the greatest feelings in the world—whether one contributes to the family, community or country."