

HEART IN HAND

In making a documentary film about Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh in 1951 (see p. 12), pediatrician Barbara McNulty (MD '75) was moved by the images of her professional forebears laying caring, attentive hands on patients. And she was reminded of a child's drawing she received more than a decade ago.

The artist was 4 years old when she accompanied her mother and 2-week-old sister on a visit to the pediatrician. McNulty had noticed that the baby's femoral pulses were absent. Through her stethoscope, she heard the galloping rhythm that indicated serious cardiac trouble. The mother rushed the baby to the hospital on McNulty's urging. The next morning, the baby had surgery to repair a congenital coarctation (constriction) of the aorta.

The big sister said that her drawing showed McNulty checking her blood pressure, adding, "I know you can't really see my heart, but I thought it should be in the picture." The mother said that she and her daughter had talked about things that doctors do to help people, and that the drawing had helped the girl with the emotions she'd been holding in since her baby sister's emergency surgery.

COURTESY B. MCNULTY