

Alfred Blalock MD, FACS

The “Blue Baby” Operation



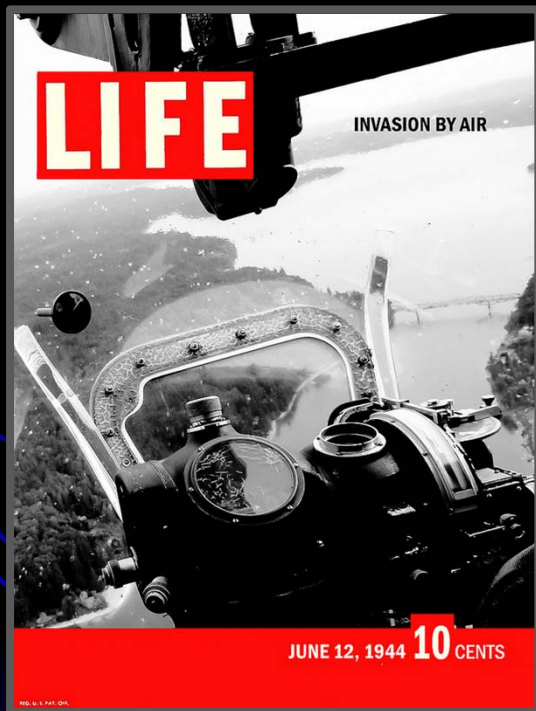
Luca A. Vricella MD, FACS

Director, Johns Hopkins Pediatric Cardiac Surgery

American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress, Chicago 2015

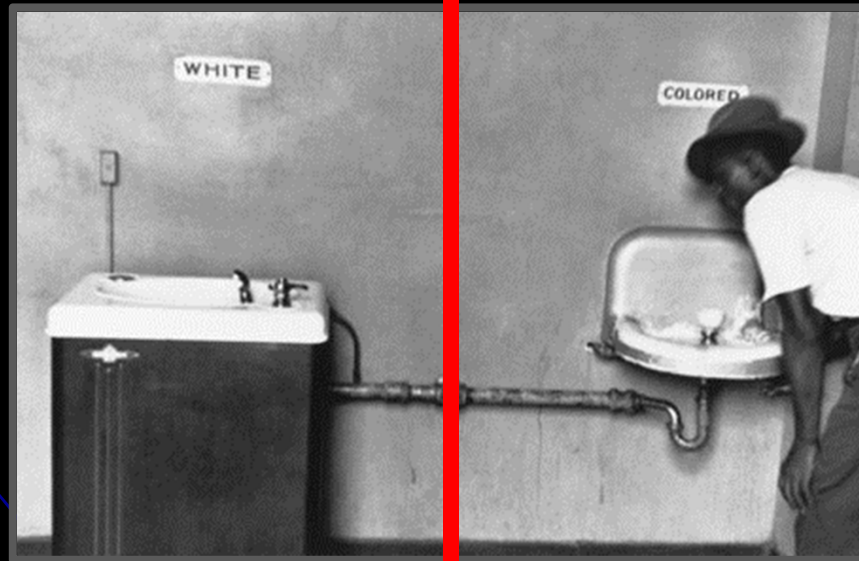


1944





1944





1944



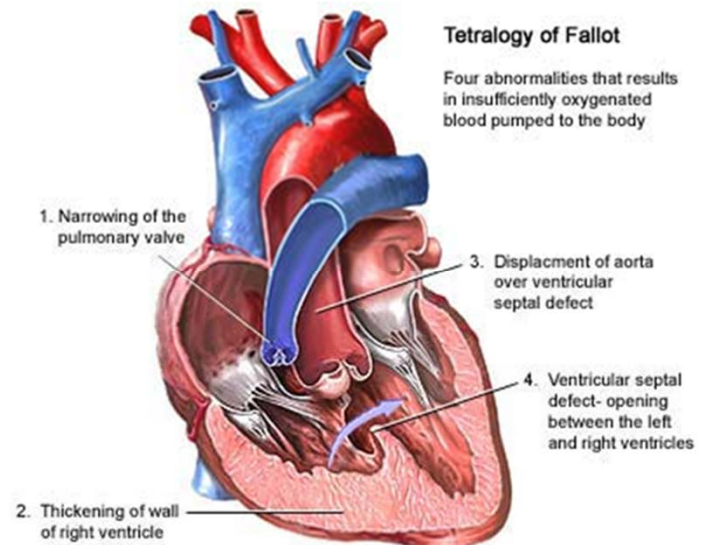


1944

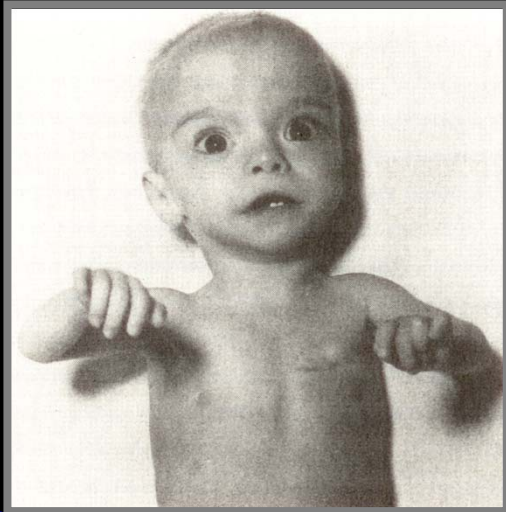




1944



PROTAGONISTS of the “Blue Baby Operation”



Eileen Saxon

“.. On evening rounds, we arrived at the crib of this fifteen-month old baby...

I was immediately astounded by the deep cyanotic appearance of the child, much more cyanotic than any patient I had ever seen before: the lips were a deep, dark blue .. The face was suffused with dilated veins, the conjunctiva almost purple.”

William P. Longmire
Alfred Blalock: his life and times
1991



PROTAGONISTS of the “Blue Baby Operation”



Helen B. Taussig (1898 – 1986)

Transferred from Boston to Baltimore
to focus on pediatric heart disease

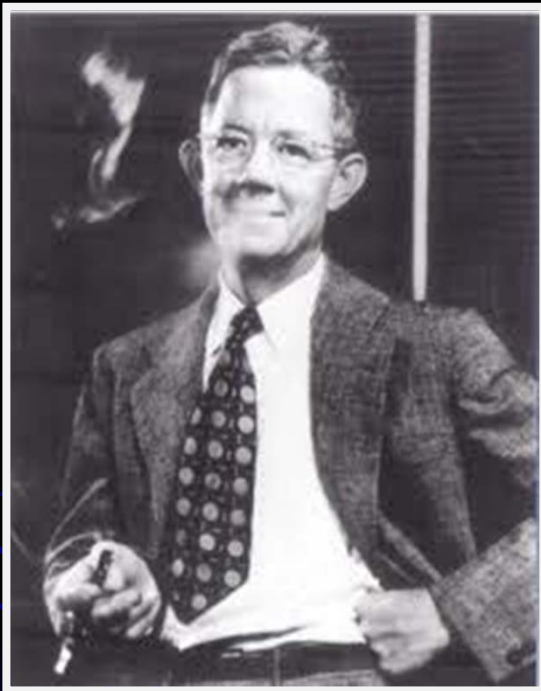
Limited diagnostic armamentarium

Dyslexic and deaf

First female President of the
American Heart Association



PROTAGONISTS of the “Blue Baby Operation”



Alfred Blalock (1899 - 1964)

After graduating Medical School, he is fired from Johns Hopkins Residency

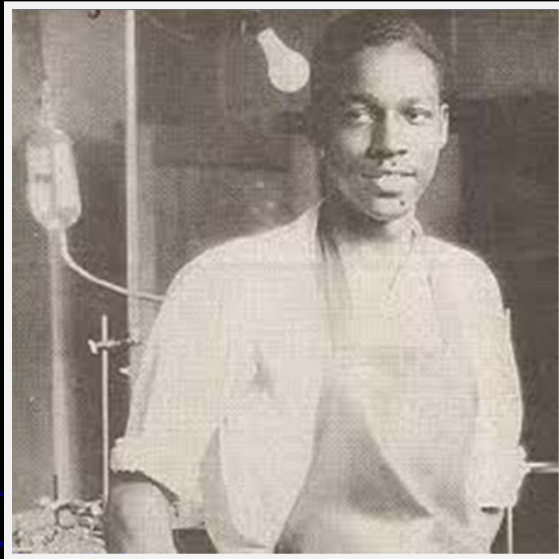
Surgical training and research on hemorrhagic shock at Vanderbilt

Severe form of tuberculosis

Arrived at Johns Hopkins as Chief in 1941, not having done a PDA ligation



PROTAGONISTS of the “Blue Baby Operation”



Vivien Thomas (1910 - 1985)

Grandson of a slave, could not go beyond high school for economic reasons

Research technician in Blalock's lab at Vanderbilt

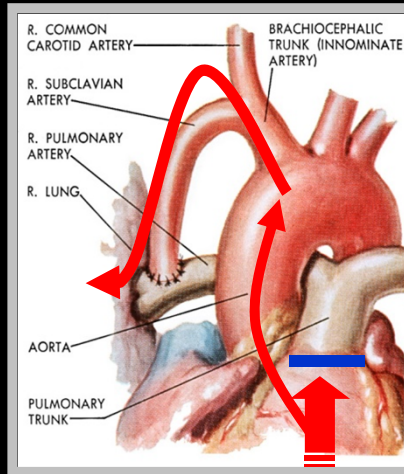
Technically gifted and creative

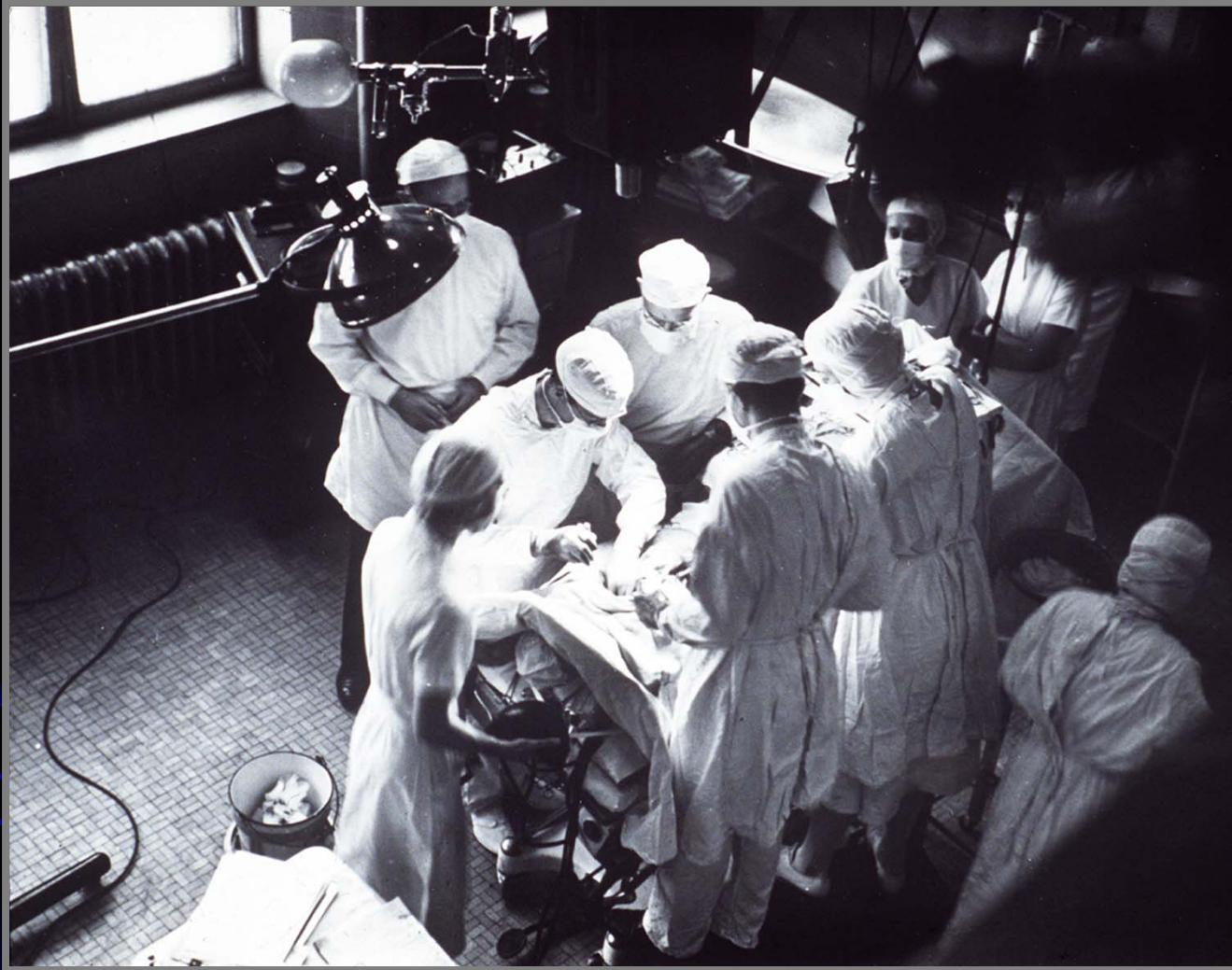
Brought to Hopkins as “Janitor” in 1941

Honoris Cause Doctor, 1976



The “Blue Baby Operation”





SURGICAL TREATMENT OF PULMONIC
STENOSIS.

TRAITEMENT CHIRURGICAL DE LA STENO-
SE DE L'ARTERE PULMONAIRE.



The “Blue Baby Operation”

Clinical observation and laboratory investigation led to the planning and performance of the first operation to treat cyanotic congenital heart disease

The Blalock - Taussig shunt allowed for thousands of children to be palliated until complete correction with open heart surgery became a reality

Model for collaboration across specialties, transcending racial and gender barriers



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