Talk by Dr. E. W. Bertner
Before Garden Club Federation
Garden Center, May 17, 1946

Madam President, Ladies:

I am a man with many problems, and like men always do in a pinch, I am turning to the ladies with a request for help.

Men like to think they are the most efficient sex, but most of us know that once the ladies become enthusiastic over a project, that project is as good as completed.

Most of you here this morning are familiar with the tremendous new development in Houston known as the Texas Medical Center, but for the benefit of those who perhaps do not have a clear picture of the scope of the project, let me sketch it briefly for you.

Within the 160 acres of the Center, which is bounded by Bellaire Boulevard, Hermann Park and Fannin Street, will be built at least five great hospitals. These are: Hermann, Methodist, St. Luke's Episcopal, M. D. Anderson Hospital for Cancer Research and the Tuberculosis Hospital.

Under the terms of the Anderson Foundation gift of this land to the Texas Medical Center it is provided that each of the hospitals will devote at least 20 per cent of its beds to the central teaching program.

This teaching program will be under the guidance of two great Texas colleges, the University of Texas and Baylor University. Texas University has been allocated sufficient acreage to construct fine, modern buildings to house its School of Dentistry and several other special institutions. The University also will have the Anderson Hospital, which by act of the Legislature, is now a state
institution. Baylor University College of Medicine is now building a splendid new $2,000,000.00 college in the Center.

Perhaps some of you do not know that the education of doctors and dentists depends as greatly on the availability of actual cases of illness and injury for study and observation as it does on textbooks.

Medicine and dentistry are not, of course, static sciences with permanent rules and formulae, but are ever-changing, ever-growing reservoirs of knowledge and application.

It is, therefore, this matter of making available to medical and dental students the widest possible range of clinical material that is, I believe, the foundation stone of the Texas Medical Center’s importance to Houston and the State of Texas. Yes - even to all men everywhere, for our doctors and dentists and nurses, and our research scientists, trained in the Texas Medical Center will take their knowledge out in the service of mankind everywhere.

A special training program for nurses, that we believe will play a part in raising this profession a step even higher than its present important place in the care of the sick and afflicted, is scheduled for the Medical Center under the supervision of the University of Houston. This young, though vigorous young Houston institution already has a fine program for training nurses, and will broaden and enlarge this course to fit into the broad general Medical Center picture.

I won't take your time to recount this morning the entire scope of the Center’s education, scientific and charitable activities but I do want to mention briefly some of the other attributes that will increase the Center’s service to our state.

Rice Institute has accepted our invitation to participate in our program in the matter of research; the U. S. Naval Hospital and the Veteran’s Hospital also
will participate in much the same manner as the hospitals to be built in the Center; the University of Texas will include in its project a special School of Geographic Medicine, a School for Preceptorial Training and a Postgraduate Medical School in addition to the Dental College and School of Stomatology; The Texas Medical Center Board of Trustees will construct a Central Clinic for indigent outpatients and an administration building; the Harris County Medical Society will construct a library building, and Hermann Hospital will soon start work on a professional building.

I have refrained from going too much into technical detail, although my own pride and interest in the Center are so great that it is difficult to limit myself to the bare facts, but I hope I have succeeded in giving you a vision of what a tremendously important development this is - not only from the humanitarian side, but from the practical viewpoint as well. Some of Houston's most successful and hard-headed business and professional men have compared the importance of the Texas Medical Center to that of the opening of the Houston Ship Channel.

The Board of Trustees of the Center felt that the women of Houston would want to have a direct share in the development of the Center, and as I said in the beginning there is a problem facing us that seems to offer a perfect opportunity for the women to participate. This is the landscaping and beautification of that part of the Center property which will be in public parks, esplanades and so forth.

I know this job will be beautifully done if you take it over and I hope that you will do so.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that the Medical Center will be one of the show places of Houston with its dozen beautiful new buildings, its streets lined with fine old trees - and, we hope - its shrubbery and bright flowers. I can think of no civic service that the garden clubs could do that would give a richer reward of satisfaction and public appreciation.