

# Virginia Apgar: From Woman to Acronym

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To provide an overview of the life and legacy of Virginia Apgar, whose contribution to medicine is immense and reaches much further than the renowned score

## DISCUSSION

Everyone born in a hospital is first viewed through the eye of Virginia Apgar. Apgar scores are applied worldwide and save thousands of children.

She was a pioneering clinician, researcher, and educator. She was born in 1909 in Westfield, NJ. She enrolled in the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University and graduated in 1933. Dr. Apgar then become an anesthesiologist and clinical director of the Department of Anesthesiology at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center and Professor of Anesthesiology at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, serving from 1938 to 1959.

## DISCUSSION

In 1952, Dr. Apgar published her assessment of neonates in which she proposed the Apgar score. The Apgar score correlates well with the degree of expectancy at birth and subsequent neurological outcome.

She obtained a degree from Johns Hopkins and became head of the Division of Congenital Malformations. She received several prestigious awards. She was the first person to catheterize the umbilical artery in a neonate.

Dr. Apgar spent her later years attempting to educate the people of the United States about the need for early detection of birth defects.

Apgar never married and was an avid fisherman, philatelist and musician, playing the cello and violin in several orchestra performances. Her personal life included many hobbies, one of which was aviation.

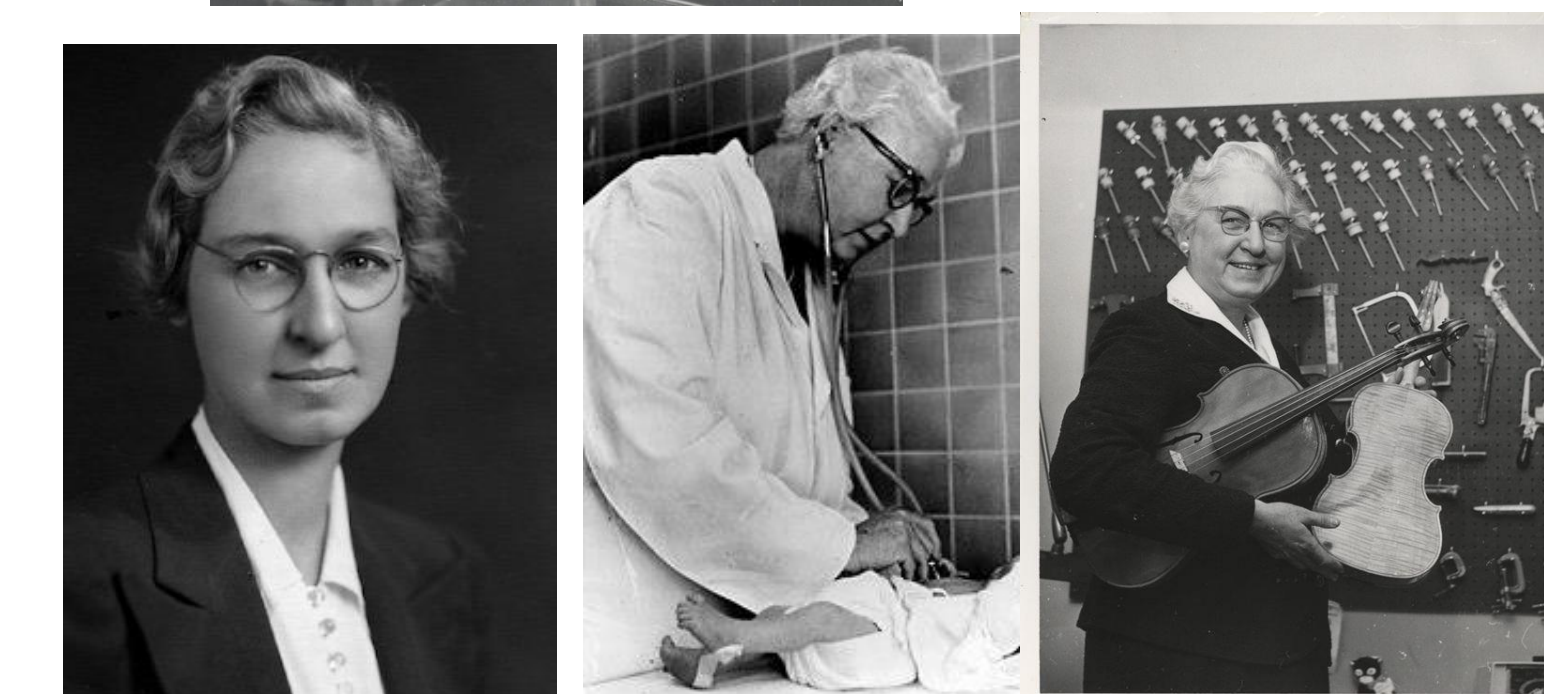
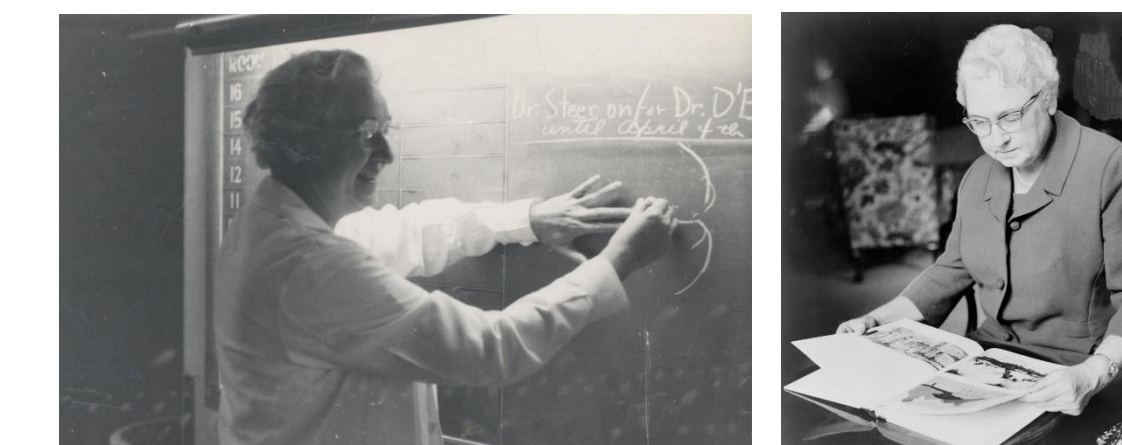
## DISCUSSION

Apgar died in 1974 at the age of 65 years. In 1995, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in the United States for achievement in science.

Her medical career includes anesthesiology, neonatology, neonatal medicine, teratogenicity, public health and education.

Apgar's legacy, more than her medical accomplishments, is a testament to her attitude towards life and living. Her colleague Dr James said it best at her memorial service, "Learning was the focal point of her life. Her curiosity was insatiable. She never became rigid. This rare quality enabled her to progress through life without becoming walled in by tradition or custom. It kept her young and vital. She started flying lessons a few years ago and even wanted to fly under the George Washington Bridge".

## DISCUSSION



## REFERENCES

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