



Charles A. Champion, D.Ph. Memphis, Tennessee

The next time you have a bad cough, you might be surprised if your pharmacist instructs you to cook a bulb of garlic in apple cider vinegar, add some honey and enjoy the benefits of your homemade cough syrup. But at Champion Pharmacy and Herb Store in Memphis, Tennessee, this remedy is just what the doctor ordered.

Dr. Charles A. Champion, a registered pharmacist and expert herbalist, is recognized for his ability to integrate modern pharmacy with the healing powers of herbs. A pharmacist since the early 1950s, he has witnessed the field's shift from natural remedies to scientifically produced medications, and he believes both methods have merit.

His familiarity with what he calls "folk medicine" began in his childhood, where it was common for families who could not afford health care to rely on natural cures. He studied pharmacognacy at Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana, which focuses on the medicinal properties of plants, animals and minerals. "Having gone to school in New Orleans, I learned about the unique culture there, where it was very typical to know about voodoo and herbs," Champion said.

He then spent two years in Germany as a pharmacist for the United States Army and returned home to practice pharmacy at John Gaston Hospital, where he worked for 12 years. After another 12 years as a pharmacist in a chain drugstore, he was ready to return to his roots – literally.

Champion opened his first independent pharmacy in 1981, and 10 years later bought his own land and building. The 2,900-square-foot location was designed to include a large herb shop along with a regular pharmacy, an area for receiving and fulfilling Internet orders, a counseling room for patients, and a compounding room.

"I decided to pursue herbal medicine because I wanted to satisfy my clientele, which was asking for herbal supplements such as wild cherry, quinine and golden seal," he said. "At times it was difficult – I remember going to association meetings and being laughed at by my peers – but I believe it's such an intricate part of an independent pharmacy."

Today, Champion says that alternative products make up approximately 65 percent of his profit. "The independents are still struggling. However, I don't consider myself in competition with the chain stores because my business is different. People still want the personal attention that we provide, and in some cases they are willing to come from miles away to get it," he said.

Champion's dedication to his practice not only impacts his clients, but also influences his family. His wife, Carolyn Champion, is a pharmacy technician; and his oldest daughter, Chandra Champion, is a certified pharmacist technician. His other two pharmacist daughters are Dr. Charita Champion-Brookins and Dr. Carol "Cookie" Champion.

With an entire family dedicated to scientific endeavors, 74-year-old Champion has no plans to retire in the near future. "When you retire you die, so I have a feeling I will always be practicing pharmacy, even when I'm up there," he said.



ONE GOAL: *To Care*

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| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| | | | 1 1968: Henry Lewis becomes first black musical director of an American symphony orchestra — New Jersey Symphony. | 2 1971: Samuel L. Gravelly Jr. becomes first African American admiral in U.S. Navy. | 3 1890: L.H. Jones patents corn harvester. 1904: Charles R. Drew, who developed process for preserving blood plasma, born. | 4 1967: Bill Cosby receives an Emmy Award for his work in the television series <i>I Spy</i> . 1972: Activist Angela Davis acquitted of all murder and conspiracy charges. |
| 5 1987: Dr. Mae C. Jemison becomes first African American woman astronaut. | 6 1831: First annual People of Color convention held in Philadelphia. | 7 1917: Poetess Gwendolyn Brooks, first black to win the Pulitzer Prize (poetry, 1950), born. | 8 1953: Supreme Court ruling bans discrimination in Washington, D.C., restaurants. | 9 1962: W.W. Braithwaite, poet, anthologist and literary critic, dies in New York City. 1995: Lincoln J. Ragsdale, pioneer fighter pilot of World War II, dies. | 10 1854: James Augustine Healy, first black Roman Catholic bishop, is ordained a priest in Notre Dame Cathedral. | 11 1964: Nelson Mandela sentenced to life imprisonment by South African government. |
| 12 1963: Medgar W. Evers, civil rights leader, assassinated in Jackson, Mississippi. | 13 1967: Thurgood Marshall nominated to Supreme Court by President Lyndon Johnson. | 14 Flag Day 1864: Congress rules equal pay for all soldiers. 1927: George Washington Carver patents process of producing paints and stains. | 15 1913: Dr. Effie O'Neal Ellis, first black woman to hold an executive position in the American Medical Association, born. | 16 1970: Kenneth A. Gibson elected mayor of Newark, New Jersey, first African American mayor of a major Eastern city. | 17 1775: Minuteman Peter Salem fights in the Battle of Bunker Hill. | 18 1942: Harvard University medical student Bernard Whitfield Robinson commissioned as the Navy's first black officer. |
| 19 Father's Day 1865: Blacks in Texas are notified of Emancipation Proclamation, issued in 1863. "Juneteenth" marks the event. | 20 1953: Albert W. Dent of Dillard University elected president of the National Health Council. | 21 1945: Col. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. becomes first black to command an Army Air Corps base. | 22 1897: William Barry patents postmarking and cancelling machine. | 23 1940: Sprinter Wilma Rudolph, winner of three gold medals at 1960 Summer Olympics, born. | 24 1964: Carl T. Rowan appointed director of the United States Information Agency. | 25 1941: Franklin D. Roosevelt issues executive order establishing Fair Employment Practices Commission. |
| 26 1975: Dr. Samuel Blanton Rosser becomes first African American certified in pediatric surgery. | 27 1991: Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall announces his retirement. | 28 1864: Fugitive slave laws repealed by Congress. 1911: Samuel J. Battle becomes first black policeman in New York City. | 29 1886: Photographer James Van Der Zee born. | 30 1921: Charles S. Gilpin awarded Spingarn Medal for his performance in Eugene O'Neill's <i>Emperor Jones</i> . | | |

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AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY CALENDAR
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