



The Blind Doctor: The Jacob Bolotin Story

Rosalind Perlman

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The Blind Doctor is the remarkable and compelling account of the first totally blind physician fully licensed to practice medicine. Jacob Bolotin was born blind to poor Jewish parents in Chicago in 1888. Rejecting the conventional wisdom of his time, he was determined to “be of use” in the world. He learned Braille and developed an uncanny sense of touch and hearing that would later make him one of the top heart and lung specialists in the city. To pay for his education, Jacob sold brushes, then typewriters, door-to-door. He fought his way into and through the Chicago College of Medicine, graduated with honors at twenty-four, and became the world's first blind physician fully licensed to practice medicine.

The voice of Dr. Jacob Bolotin was one of the first to raise the awareness of the world to the plight of the blind. His speeches about his own life and the need for treating people with disabilities as capable and productive citizens were in such demand he often gave four talks a day while working full time as a doctor and teaching at three medical colleges. He also started one of the first blind Boy Scout troops in the United States.

Dr. Jacob Bolotin died in 1924; he was only thirty-six years old. Five thousand people attended his funeral.

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