

## THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER

### -- ITS ORIGINS

"The Texas Medical Center contains the greatest collection of medical teaching, research and healing facilities in the world."---Dr. Michael deBakey, president, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston.

The Texas Medical Center traces its origins to two unrelated events, one in 1936, the other in 1941, which men of great vision seized upon to bring a dream to fruition.

The first event occurred on June 9, 1936, when Monroe D. Anderson, one of the founders of Anderson, Clayton & Co., met with his attorney, Col. William B. Bates, and signed the trust indenture creating the M. D. Anderson Foundation, with an initial contribution of \$10,000.

The second event occurred on June 30, 1941, when the Texas Legislature approved an act appropriating \$500,000 for the establishment of a state cancer hospital and research facility, the location, control and management to be under the supervision of the University of Texas.

No one possibly could have foreseen that these two events, separated by a five-year span of time, could result eventually in decisions being reached in concert by the University and by the Anderson Foundation to establish a medical center in Houston, with the cancer hospital being the first unit. Yet, in retrospect, it seems only logical that the chain of events put into motion by these two actions would lead to such decisions,

since both had the common objective of doing something for the benefit and welfare of mankind.

Mr. Anderson, in setting up the Foundation, was motivated by a desire that his fortune be used, among other charitable and benevolent purposes,

"To the establishment, support and maintenance of hospitals, homes and institutions for the care of the sick, the young, the aged, the incompetent and the helpless among the people; and,

"To the promotion of health, science, education, and the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding among the people."

For the three years prior to his death on Aug. 6, 1939, Mr. Anderson, a bachelor, made additional bequests to the Foundation totalling about \$300,000. The trustees, then composed of Mr. Anderson, Colonel Bates and John H. Freeman, one of Colonel Bates' distinguished law partners, made some modest bequests to charitable undertakings but made no major commitments.

Mr. Anderson left his fortune of about \$19 million to the Foundation. Following his death Horace M. Wilkins, president of the State National Bank, was named a trustee to fill the vacancy. The trustees then started seeking a project, or projects, of major proportions to bring the greatest good to the greatest number of people with the Foundation's resources. They concluded that Houston needed a medical center comparable in stature and prestige to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota and the Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore, and that the Foundation's funds would be used to achieve that lofty dream, in keeping with Mr. Anderson's desire that his fortune be used to help his fellow man.

The Dream Takes Shape

The Anderson trustees' interest in medical institutions had been encouraged by two men---Dr. E. W. Bertner, prominent Houston gynecologist, and Dr. Frederick C. Elliott, dean of the then unaffiliated Texas Dental College of Houston---who were to become key figures, in association with the Anderson trustees, in developing the Texas Medical Center complex as we know it today. For a number of years prior to World War II they had been active in Houston Chamber of Commerce programs relating to the community's health and medical needs, and in calling attention to the community's growing needs for medical institutions of all kinds. Through the Educational Committee they had encouraged interest in obtaining a medical school as an extension of the community's educational facilities and around which other medical research and healing institutions could be grouped to form a great medical complex.

Dr. Bertner became an adviser to the Anderson trustees, the first director of the M. D. Anderson Hospital, and later the first president of the Texas Medical Center, Inc. Upon his death from cancer in 1950, he was succeeded by Dr. Elliott as the chief executive officer of the medical center. Dr. Elliott held his position until his retirement in 1962.

Less than two years after Mr. Anderson's death the Texas Legislature approved the act which laid the basis for the chain of events which led to creation of the Texas Medical Center. The act was introduced by Representative Arthur Cato of Weatherford, who was distressed by the death of his father from cancer and thought there was great need in Texas for a cancer research and treatment facility.

Mr. Cato received help from the medical profession, notably from Dr. John Spies, who then was dean of the University of Texas Medical School

at Galveston, in gaining support for his bill in the legislature. The bill, among its several features, provided for the University to accept gifts and grants of money to supplement the modest legislative appropriation for the cancer facility.

#### The Starting Point

The Anderson trustees recognized in this legislation the starting point for a medical center in Houston, if they could obtain the facility for the community. They lost no time in contacting Dr. Spies, Dr. Homer P. Rainey, then president of the University of Texas; members of the University's Board of Regents and its Development Board; the Executive Committee of the Houston Chamber of Commerce, and others in position to be helpful in obtaining the institution for Houston. One obstacle to be overcome was reluctance to locate a state-operated medical facility apart from the University of Texas Medical School at Galveston.

Conferences with the various officials resulted in the announcement on March 27, 1942, by Dr. Rainey that Houston would be the location for the cancer hospital, that the Foundation had agreed to give \$500,000 to the University to match the legislative appropriation, that the Foundation would provide a permanent site for the hospital in the Medical Center which the Foundation proposed to develop, and that the Foundation would provide temporary quarters pending construction of the permanent facility following the close of World War II. On Aug. 8, 1942, the University regents formally approved the arrangement with the Anderson Foundation for location of the cancer hospital in Houston. (Details of the opening of the hospital are provided in the following section of this report).

In making the announcement of the cancer hospital location in Houston, Dr. Rainey said:

"We believe Houston, more than any other city in this part of the world, offers the best opportunity for a medical center."

Dr. Rainey said the proposed medical center would comprise six units at the beginning: Hermann Hospital, Crippled Children's Hospital, Houston Tuberculosis Hospital, Harris County Emergency Blood Bank and the Houston (Texas) Dental College.

Dr. Rainey also announced on Aug. 29, 1942, that the University would take over and operate the Texas Dental College of Houston as another facility for the proposed medical center.

Dr. Elliott had proposed months earlier that the University take over and operate the dental college, since the institution, which had operated as a non-profit organization, would lose accreditation without university affiliation. The legislative act authorizing the affiliation was signed on May 14, 1943, by Governor Coke Stevenson, and the dental college was opened on Sept. 1, 1943, as a unit of the University system in the dental college's building at Fannin Street and Blodgett Avenue. The Anderson trustees pledged financial support for later location in the proposed medical center. (These events are detailed in a later section of this report).

The Site is Chosen

The Anderson trustees proposed that the medical center be developed on a 134-acre site owned by the City of Houston south of Hermann Hospital. Colonel Bates said this is "the logical place to start a medical center," since Hermann Hospital, opened in 1925 as a part-charity part-pay hospital, was on the northern bounds of the site and would soon construct a new wing, and that Rice Institute (now Rice University), with its pre-medical courses and stature in the sciences, was only a short distance away and was in position to make important contributions to the medical center.

Prior to Dr. Rainey's announcement, Colonel Bates and Mr. Freeman met with the Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee on March 10, 1942, to outline the Foundation's plans for development of a medical center, to report that negotiations with the University for location of the cancer hospital in the proposed center were nearing the announcement stage, and to invite Chamber of Commerce support of its program, especially in acquiring the city-owned property for the center. The Executive Committee pledged its support.

The Chamber of Commerce Public Health Committee suggested to the Executive Committee on June 2, 1942, that Dr. Bertner be appointed temporary director of the cancer hospital. President W. S. Cochran appointed Dan J. Harrison, oil man; Charles I. Francis, attorney; Dr. Judson L. Taylor, physician, and William Strauss, insurance man and Public Health Committee chairman, as a committee to contact Dr. Rainey with the suggestion. Dr. Elliott made the contact for the committee, resulting in Dr. Bertner's appointment in July, 1942.

The Naval Hospital

Meanwhile, other links in the chain of events were being forged in development of the medical center. Dr. Bertner met with the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors on September 15, 1942, and stated that, in addition to the units originally mentioned by Dr. Rainey for inclusion in the medical center, there was the possibility of adding a Marine Hospital, a Naval Hospital and Dispensary, a School of Public Health and a School of Geographic Medicine, the latter two institutions proposed for operation by the University of Texas. Dr. Bertner invited Chamber of Commerce assistance "to bring about their establishment."

As to the Naval Hospital, the Chamber of Commerce made vigorous efforts to obtain it for Houston. It submitted a comprehensive brief to the Navy Department in behalf of a Houston location and offered to provide a site free of cost to the Government. As will be detailed in a later section of this report, the Naval Hospital was obtained for Houston in 1944. The Navy, after nearly a year of indecision, selected a 118-acre site at Almeda Road and Marlboro Drive (now Holcombe Boulevard), after the site had already been sold to a real estate developer. The Chamber of Commerce and the Anderson Foundation rescued this embarrassing situation, so that the hospital was indeed built upon the site. The hospital was opened in 1946, and in 1948 was transferred to the

Veterans Administration, which continues to operate it today in close affiliation with the Texas Medical Center.

The School of Public Health mentioned by Dr. Bertner was authorized by the Legislature in 1947, but the School of Geographic Medicine and the Marine Hospital did not materialize, although some features proposed for the School of Geographic Medicine were incorporated in the School of Public Health. In his original announcement that the cancer hospital would be located in Houston, Dr. Rainey listed the Houston Tuberculosis Hospital as one of the facilities to be in the proposed medical center. The voters of Houston had authorized \$600,000 in bonds for construction of the facility. However, changing circumstances in later years resulted in the city-county hospital (Ben Taub Hospital) being built in the Medical Center and the vacated Jefferson Davis Hospital on Allen Parkway became the tuberculosis hospital, with the bond funds going into construction of Ben Taub Hospital.

The announcements by Dr. Rainey relating to the cancer hospital and the Texas Dental College and the prospect that the Anderson Foundation's efforts would indeed result in a great medical center for Houston, excited great civic interest in the community. The Houston Chamber of Commerce sponsored a dinner on Oct. 6, 1942, honoring Dr. Rainey and Dr. Chauncey D. Leake, who had succeeded Dr. Spies as dean of the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, for the leadership role the University had assumed, in cooperation with the Anderson Foundation, in laying the foundations for the medical center.

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Baylor Moves to Houston

The year 1943 was an historic one for the future of the medical center. While plans for the cancer hospital and the Texas Dental College affiliation with the University of Texas were being developed, trustees of the Baylor University College of Medicine approached the Anderson trustees with a proposal that the college be moved to Houston and be included in plans for the medical center, provided certain financial support could be obtained. This provided the Anderson trustees the great opportunity they had been seeking to obtain a medical teaching institution for the center.

On May 8, 1943, the Baylor and Anderson trustees reached an agreement for the college to be moved to Houston from Dallas. The agreement called for the Foundation to grant \$1 million to Baylor for a building on a 20-acre site in the medical center, to provide \$1 million over a period of 10 years for research purposes, and to provide temporary quarters in which the college could operate pending construction of the permanent facilities in the medical center. Additionally, the Houston Chamber of Commerce agreed to raise \$500,000, to be paid to the college over a 10-year period.

The Baylor University College of Medicine (which later cut its ties with Baylor University and the Baptist General Convention of Texas

to become the Baylor College of Medicine) opened on July 12, 1943, in temporary quarters on Buffalo Drive (now Allen Parkway) in the building which had been the first retail store of Sears, Roebuck & Co., in Houston, and which in more recent times had been used as a Sears mail-order warehouse. (Details of the removal to Houston are provided in a later section of this report).

Another significant development of 1943 was approval by the voters, on December 14, of the proposal for the City of Houston to sell the 134-acre site to the Anderson Foundation for the medical center. Voter approval was required since the site was city park land.

Will C. Hogg, a son of Governor Jim Hogg, and chairman of the City Planning Commission in the 1920s, had purchased this property for possible location of medical facilities, but his plans did not materialize. He presented the land to the city for park purposes.

The Foundation completed the \$400,000 purchase early in 1944 and thus came into possession of the land which, with later acquisitions of adjacent property, today comprises the Texas Medical Center. There was only limited access to the property, since Fannin Street then ended on the north at the entrance to Hermann Park. The Foundation spent some \$500,000 to prepare the site with streets and utilities. Fannin Street later was extended by the city southward to and beyond Holcombe Boulevard, opening the site to the full-scale development which followed the close of World War II.

Thus the dream of a great medical center for Houston took shape during the difficult war years of 1942-1943.