The University of Nebraska College of Medicine

THE SECOND CENTURY
THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS
1980 - 2000
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

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INTRODUCTION

In May 2000, Dean Armitage and Associate Dean Klintberg took me to lunch. Recognizing that there is no such thing as a free lunch, my defenses were up. When the shoe dropped, I was asked to bring the history of the College of Medicine up-to-date. The Dean was of the opinion that four significant events had occurred which warranted extending the written history after only twenty years. I was quite reluctant and lunch ended with my agreeing to "think about it". Finally in August I agreed, albeit still reluctantly.

As I pointed out to the Dean, because of my commitment to flower gardening I have devoted only part of the three winter months to the project each year. I have interviewed appropriate individuals who had the information I needed and/or were involved in both sides of controversial issues. In addition, I reviewed the Medical Center's internal publications, news media, "The First Hundred Years of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine", "The University of Nebraska Hospital The First Seventy-Five Years 1917-1992", and any other historical sources I could find. The four significant events which prompted this update were: changes in the curriculum in the College of Medicine, the merger of the University and Clarkson Hospitals, the controversy regarding fetal cell research, and the controversy which resulted in the resignation of Chancellor Aschenbrener.

It will become obvious to the reader that this not a narrative history of the twenty years. I have covered the four "issues" and filled in necessary and appropriate details about the continuing development of the College of Medicine and the Medical Center. There is a fairly extensive reference list documenting my sources of written material. The specific content of significant interviews obviously cannot be documented. I have tried to provide details about departments, administration and physical changes which may be useful for future reference.

I hope that the reader will get some appreciation of the fairly significant changes that have occurred in the past twenty years and have added to the continuing growth of the College of Medicine over 120 years.

F. Miles Skultety, M.D.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to many people for the information contained in this history. I have tried to keep a record of all who helped but I know I have lost some names over the three year interrupted periods that this has taken. To those whom I have left out, I apologize and assure you that it was not deliberate.

Elaine C. Ryan, Administrative Assistant to the Dean, College of Medicine, who set up interviews, searched out the “right people” and most of all typed and retyped material for the manuscript from its haphazard beginning to the final form. I also want to thank Judy Houfek Administrative Assistant in the Dean’s office who searched out administrative data, changes of department names and the date of such changes, department chairs and dates of service, etc. Irene Klintberg, PhD, Executive Associate Dean, knew where to go for needed information which saved me time and stress.

A number of individuals provided information on the hospital merger and clinical practice matters. Dr. Louis Burgher, who was CEO of the Nebraska Health System, when I interviewed him provided background, insight and evaluation of the new system which was invaluable. Dr. William Berndt who was Chancellor at the time of the merger and had much to do with it also was able to provide useful information. Others were Dr. James Armitage, Dean of the College of Medicine, who served as the first chairman of the NHS Board, Dr. Rodney Markin, President of the University Medical Associates, Dr. Frederick Paustian and Dr. Harry McFadden.

On the sensitive issue of Chancellor Aschenbrener’s resignation and the controversy which produced it, a number of individuals were willing to talk to me on all sides of the issues involved. What they had to say obviously, is completely confidential. They were Dr. Ward Chambers, Dr. James Newland, Dr. Bruce Buehler, Dr. Jon Thompson and Dr. James Armitage.

Dr. Gerald Moore, Associate Dean for Curriculum, allowed me to take up his time on several occasions to explain the new curriculum and its background, and I am most grateful to him. I attempted in the section on Education, to cover most of the areas in which the College of Medicine is involved. This required contacting many different individuals in various programs and I thank them for their cooperation. Larry Willis, Ed.D, Associate Dean for Continuing Medical
Education, and Brenda Ram, Planning Coordinator, Continuing Education; Sue Eulberg, Administration Assistant, Physician’s Assistant Program; Debbie Bohlington and Sonja Cox, Program Coordinator, the MD/PhD Program; Dr. Mary McNamee, Associate Director Student Equity, the NU-PATH program; Roxanna Jokela, Director, RHEN, Peggy Bottjen, Coordinator, Allied Health, School of Allied Health; Cory Shaw, Chief Administrative Officer, University Medical Associates; Gigi Rogers, Coordinator, Academic Affairs Office; Vicki Hamm, Administrative Director, Graduate Medical Education, provided the material on residency and fellowship programs which are certainly a significant part of the College’s education program.

Tom O’Connor, Senior Associate Director, Department of Public Affairs, was a source of information on many things when I needed help. He had followed and unfortunately he continues to follow the fetal cell research controversy and in addition to his own definite knowledge, he provided several reference sources. Tom, your help was invaluable.

Dr. David Crouse, interim Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs, provided the information on research funding and the UNIMED Corporation for which I thank him and the ladies in the Grant Office who searched out various research funding.

John Schleicher, Head, Special Collections at the McGoogan Library searched for and obtained the various photographs and architect’s renderings needed to illustrate this report. They were scattered throughout the Medical Center. Without John’s help there would have been little or no pictorial documentation of the physical changes which have occurred. Many thanks, John.

To all these individuals, I am grateful. Without them this history would be no more than a short term paper.