

# 75 Years of Medicine in the Making

- 1892 University of Chicago founded.
- 1898 Chicago affiliates with Rush Medical College. Students receive two years of preclinical training and basic science at the university, then two years of clinical training at Rush. Some form of affiliation remains in place until 1941.
- 1905 Frank Billings appointed first chairman of the department of medicine.
- 1916 Abraham Flexner creates a plan for a Chicago medical school, calling for a full-time faculty, a 250-bed hospital and an endowment big enough that the medical school won't have to depend on patients who can pay. Plans are soon put on hold for World War I.
- May 7, 1925 Groundbreaking ceremonies held for the 215-bed Billings Hospital, which will house the departments of medicine, surgery and pathology, and Abbott Memorial Hall, which will house physiology and pharmacology. Abbott, completed first, opens in late 1926.



**Oct. 3, 1927** The first two patients enter Billings Hospital, nearly a month before its official opening. The patient with medical record number 1 is Victor S., a 21-year-old male bank teller, who complains of sore and bleeding gums. Diagnosed with Vincent's infection, he is treated with salvarsan, which produces "satisfactory results." The first surgical patient, also seen Oct. 3, is Marian P., 21, a farmer with a stiff left elbow from a fall five years before. Dallas Phemister, MD, performs an arthroplasty for ankylosis, which improves the patient's range of motion. The patient later reports "the operation was an unqualified success."

**Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 1927** In a two-day convocation, the university officially opens the medical school Oct. 31 and the hospital Nov 1. The hospital consists of a single six-story quadrangle: Hospital functions occupy the southern front of the quadrangle, the current A corridor; the departments of surgery, pathology and medicine fill the other three sides.

**August 1929** William Wexford Redfern, the first medical student to complete his clinical training entirely at the university, graduates. A woman, Sylvia H. Bensley, is the second student to complete training, graduating in December 1930.

**May 1, 1930** Bobs Roberts Memorial Hospital, housing the new department of pediatrics and 80 hospital beds for children, opens. The building costs \$813,521. Frederic W. Schultz, MD, is appointed the first chairman of pediatrics in December. The department consists of two professors, one associate professor and two instructors.

**1930** Clinical and basic sciences unite under the new Division of Biological Sciences.

**May 25, 1931** Joseph Bolivar DeLee, MD, chairman of obstetrics and gynecology, delivers the first baby in the newly opened 140-bed Chicago Lying-in Hospital. The building costs \$2,377,000. DeLee insists that it be separate from the rest of the hospital to reduce traffic and avoid contamination.

**1931** With support from private donors and the Home for Destitute Crippled Children, the McElwee-Hicks Hospital opens with 100 beds primarily devoted to orthopedics.

**1932** A survey of patients treated in 1931-32 finds vast differences in patient bills. A third were not charged, 13 percent paid a reduced fee of \$1 to \$4 per day and 40 percent paid \$5 per day. Six percent were charged \$6 to \$7 per day, the cost of a semi-private room. A private room fetched \$8 or more per day. Consultants who examine the hospitals' finances recommend drastic cost reductions, including sharp decreases in staff and wages.





**Oct. 16, 1939** Abe Johnson, a 75-year-old man with advanced prostate cancer, is the first patient to be treated with orchietomy, a new approach to cancer therapy developed by Charles Huggins, MD. Removing the source of testosterone causes Johnson's hormone-dependent tumors to vanish. Johnson died of heart disease 13 years later, age 88. Huggins published the first reports of this approach in 1941 and won the Nobel Prize for this work in 1966.

**1943** Leon Jacobson and colleagues perform the first successful cancer chemotherapy using nitrogen mustard, the active agent in mustard gas. The patient's lymphoma goes into remission.

**1945** During World War II, Alf Alving, professor of medicine, and several hundred volunteers from Statesville Prison begin testing new drugs for malaria. The research determines the safe and effective doses for chloroquine and later primaquine. In the process, researchers discover a common genetic abnormality that makes about 10 percent of blacks susceptible to loss of red blood cells after exposure to primaquine. They trace the damage to an enzyme deficiency, providing the first biochemical explanation for a genetic flaw.



**1950** Thanks to a generous gift from Maurice Goldblatt, Chicago opens the seven-story Nathan Goldblatt Memorial Hospital for Cancer Research, containing 60 beds plus clinic and laboratory space, some of which would soon become part of the Ben May Laboratory for Cancer Research. Another gift from Maurice Goldblatt enables the construction of the Goldblatt Pavilion (completed in 1961), finally connecting Billings Hospital with Chicago Lying-In.

**1953** The Atomic Energy Commission provides funds to build, equip and operate the Argonne Cancer Research Hospital, a 50-bed facility devoted to the study of radiation therapy for cancer, an outgrowth of the Manhattan Project.

**Sept. 4, 1953** Nathaniel Kleitman and Eugene Aserinsky publish the first description of REM sleep, considered the beginning of the scientific study of sleep.

**1953** Stanley Miller, a graduate student in chemistry, reveals the probable origins of life, showing that electrical charges, such as lightning, could convert the primitive earth's atmosphere to a variety of amino acids, the building blocks of proteins.

**Jan. 23, 1967** Patients move from Bobs Roberts into the 100-bed Silvain and Arma Wyler Children's Hospital, built at a cost of \$8 million.

**June 1968** The medical school is renamed the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine after a gift of \$12 million from the Pritzker family.



**1977** Combining support from the department of surgery and the Brain Research Foundation, the six-story \$22.4 million Surgery-Brain Research Pavilion opens, providing 17 new operating rooms and five floors of research space.

**Oct. 15, 1983** The \$70 million Bernard A. Mitchell Hospital opens, thanks to a \$14.5 million donation from Bernard A. Mitchell, replacing most of the beds in the former Billings Hospital.

**Nov. 27, 1989** Chicago surgeons perform the first successful living-donor liver transplant. Teri and Alyssa Smith, the donor and recipient, are both fine. In fall 2002, Alyssa started ninth grade.

**1993** The \$50 million Donnelly Biological Sciences Learning Center opens, serving as the primary location for medical school classes and as home for the Jules F. Knapp Medical Research Building, which includes the Gwen Knapp Center for Lupus and Immunology Research.

**Sept. 9, 1996** Dedication of the Duchossois Center for Advanced Medicine, a 525,000-square-foot, \$150-million outpatient care facility – the biggest, most technologically advanced building of its kind in the city – supported by a \$21 million gift from the Duchossois family.

**June 5, 2002** The Pritzker family of Chicago announces a \$30 million donation to the university. The gift is part of a recently announced \$2 billion fund-raising campaign to support the Biological Sciences Division and its Pritzker School of Medicine.

**2004** Thanks in part to a \$21 million gift from Gary Comer, founder of Lands' End, the Comer Children's Hospital slated to open.

The Interdivisional Research Building, the largest research facility in the university's history, is scheduled to open.