

How Toledo Got Med School

By WILLIAM V. MERRIMAN
Repository Staff Writer

TOLEDO, Ohio—The Medical College of Ohio will admit its first class here this fall, in an abandoned section of county-

owned William Roche Tuberculosis Hospital in South Toledo.

Far from the glittering \$93 million facility it will be one day, the makeshift school into which 33 freshmen will enter nevertheless represents the first tangible product of 15 years of work by a community to attract a medical school.

HOW DID TOLEDO outbid Dayton, Cleveland, Canton-Akron and Youngstown in the early 1960s for the state's fourth medical college? With a fifth medical facility in the works, what could other metropolitan areas do to persuade the Ohio Board of Regents and Ohio General Assembly they should get it?

(Last month, the Ohio Legislature authorized the Board of Regents to study the feasibility of a medical school in northeastern Ohio. This could be in the Canton or Akron areas.)

The Repository found that Toledo's winning combination was ample land in an existing medical complex and the persistence of a few people who kept the issue alive in the public mind.

HOW WELL the ingredients meshed, after state funds became available in 1964, is pointed up by the fact that admission of the first class comes only 4½ years after the school was created by the Legislature. No other medical school ever opened in a shorter period of time after its formation, according to Glidden Brooks, president of the school.

The site for the school was tailor-made—in the middle of a South Side campus which includes Toledo State Hospital, county-run Maumee Valley Hospital (which includes the county home for the aged) and William Roche TB Hospital.

Land acquisition was no problem. State-owned property at the state hospital merely was transferred by the Legislature

to the medical school and, without demolition or forced relocation of residents, the school had 328 prime acres within the city.

COST of the purchase was \$500,000 (removed from the pocket of one state department and placed in another), plus \$63,000 for 20 acres bought from a private property owner adjacent to the hospital.

Advantages of building a medical school as a hub for existing psychiatric and medical treatment facilities were obvious from the beginning.

Large educational institutions within the area were another factor enhancing the location. Toledo University and Bowling Green State University are within a few minutes' drive of the new school.

There mere existence of patients—in a metropolitan area of 500,000—was another ingredient Toledo offered. And the area's cultural activities were a drawing card for faculty members.

ONE OF THE FIRST men to start talking here about these advantages was then State Rep. Michael Damas. Later elected to Toledo City Council, in 1954, Mr. Damas called for a study of the possibility of establishing a medical school.

City Council authorized the investigation into building a medical facility at Toledo University, then city-supported, and Mr. Damas was appointed chairman.

The research committee recommended that Maumee Valley Hospital, run by the county, could serve as a teaching hospital and operations of a medical school could be financed by county funds for Maumee Valley and a half-mill city levy. Gov. Frank J. Lausche told the committee he would push for \$5 million to build the school itself, on the TU campus.

BUT THE IDEA went nowhere. The medical profession generally was unenthusiastic and Dr. Edward McCormack, a Toledo physician and past president of the American Medical Association, told the committee a school was not needed.

(That view does not exist in the medical profession in the Canton area, where a group of doctors this summer enthusiastically endorsed the idea of a medical college.)

The issue then lay dormant for several years, until Mike Damas was elected mayor.

Still thinking the medical school should be a part of TU, Mayor Damas first appointed his brother-in-law when a vacancy on the university board of trustees occurred and later named a doctor when the term of a trustee who opposed the medical school expired.

THE MAYOR then appointed another study committee, naming men recommended by the Toledo Academy of Medicine, an assistant newspaper publisher, the president of the Toledo Hospital Council, an industrialist, a black lawyer and the director of the city's Catholic hospitals.

City Council appropriated \$7,000 for the study and Dr. William R. Willard, dean of the University of Kentucky School of Medicine, was hired as a consultant.

Dr. Willard issued a report in 1961, informing the committee, by then incorporated into the

Toledo Area Medical College and Education Foundation, that a medical science building and a 350-bed teaching hospital would cost from \$17 million to \$24 million, with \$2 million a year needed for operations.

LATER THE foundation hired Dr. Ward Darley, executive secretary of the Association of American Medical Colleges, to explore the need for doctors and financial, management and recruitment operations for a school.

Dr. Charles Letourneau, director of Northwestern University Hospital's administration department, urged in a Toledo appearance that the foundation develop a positive attitude toward the school, working to reduce opposition from some physicians who opposed the school because its professors would be experts and could move in on practices of other doctors.

With an idea of a medical school attracting more and more interest and less opposition in Toledo, two Toledo men conveniently were elevated to key state positions.

ONE WAS MICHAEL V. DISALLE, former Toledo mayor who was elected governor in 1958. An Interim Commission on Education Beyond the High School, appointed by Gov. Disalle, recommended in 1962 that a new state medical school be created — at Toledo.

The other was John Marshall Briley, unsuccessful Republican U.S. senator candidate in 1962, who was named in 1963 as the first chairman of the Ohio Board of Regents.

The regents took another look at medical education and recommended on Sept. 11, 1964, that the Ohio Legislature enact legislation establishing a college of medicine at Toledo.

Hardly had the ink dried on the regents' report when the General Assembly, meeting in a special late-autumn session, created the Medical College of Ohio at Toledo.

FROM THAT POINT, it was only a matter of getting the legislature to appropriate the money. And the now-recessed 108th Ohio General Assembly saw to that — \$35 million for construction and \$5.1 million for operations for 1970-71.

Based on a 10-year-old national study by the U.S. Public Health Service, Ohio school should be graduating nearly 60 doctors a year. Only 426 freshmen will enter Ohio State, Cincinnati and Case-Western Reserve University medical schools this fall.