



New WMU medical school now honors both of Kalamazoo's medical pioneers

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KALAMAZOO, MI – With the **announcement that Western Michigan University is naming its new medical school after Dr. Homer Stryker**, an orthopedic surgeon who went on to found a Fortune 500 company, both of Kalamazoo's medical pioneers will be well-represented on the new campus.

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On Tuesday, President John Dunn announced that

the new Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine was being named in honor of Ronda Stryker and William Johnston, who donated the anonymous gift of \$100 million in 2011 that made the medical school possible.

Last fall, the medical school's downtown campus was named in honor of William Erastus Upjohn, founder of the pharmaceutical company that bore his name.

"These individuals have left a legacy that continues to give back to the community," said Dr. Hal Jenson, founding dean of the medical school, in an interview. "Just as important as the legacy they've left is the exemplary model they are for our students."

After the announcement, university officials, elected representatives and the heads of both area hospitals all said they found it incredibly appropriate that the medical school, which has been funded entirely by private donations, honor both men.

"I can't think of a more appropriate namesake," WMU President John Dunn said Tuesday when the announcement was made.

In fact, he said after the announcement, he never had considered an alternative.

"None of us particularly enjoy being vague about things," he said of having to keep the identities of the donors secret until today.

"They're not braggadacious people," he said of Stryker and Johnston, longtime Kalamazoo philanthropists and WMU alumni with deep ties to the community. Their original \$100 million gift to the university to launch the medical school initiative in Kalamazoo was, at the time, reportedly the largest donation made to a public university or college in Michigan.

Stryker and Johnston were not in attendance Tuesday, saying they preferred to have the focus remain on the medical school.

"My grandfather always focused on patient outcomes," Ronda Stryker said in a statement. "His innovation work and research was never about himself but always about the patient, better health care outcomes and better equipment for doctors. I am certain he would be thrilled to know that medical education and research are taking place in Kalamazoo. While he wouldn't care that the school was named after him, it is without doubt a fitting and lasting recognition to his contribution to medicine, medical research, innovative products and service to patient healthcare outcomes."

The first 50 students are scheduled to begin classes this fall at the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine.

"Dr. Homer Stryker's lifelong efforts to develop innovative medical products and procedures have saved thousands, if not millions, of lives throughout the world," said Congressman Fred Upton, R-St. Joseph, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. "Naming WMU's medical school after such a dedicated doctor who created the products needed by his patients so they could recover faster and lead fuller lives bodes well for those entering the new program."

Stryker Corp., which has more than 25,000 employees worldwide, also has made a separate and "significant" commitment to support the medical school, Dunn said, although he declined to give an amount.

"This is a wonderful development for our community and for this new medical school," said Paul Spaude, president and CEO of Borgess. "Worldwide, the Stryker name evokes a sense of medical innovation and quality. Here in Kalamazoo, it is synonymous with community commitment. What better name for a medical school that is a true community collaboration."

The school is being developed in collaboration with Kalamazoo teaching hospitals Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare.

The new medical school's educational facility will be on its W.E. Upjohn M.D. Campus in downtown Kalamazoo. That site includes a 350,000-square-foot medical research facility, currently under renovation, that was a gift from Mattawan's MPI Research in 2011. MPI Research is led by William Parfet, great grandson of the campus' namesake,

who launched the Upjohn Co. in Kalamazoo in 1886.

"Having the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine on the W.E. Upjohn M.D. Campus acknowledges the special life sciences legacy that is unique to Kalamazoo," said Frank Sardone, president and CEO of Bronson Healthcare. "Both names reflect the storied traditions that are so much a part of this community -- traditions we'll want to introduce to new generations of medical professionals."

The new medical school would not have been possible, Dunn said, without Stryker's and Johnston's generosity.

"It is my privilege and pleasure to be able to now publicly acknowledge their gifts and to let the larger community know who shared our vision and passion for this project early in the process and to whom we all owe a great debt of gratitude," said Dunn, who originally announced the \$100 million gift in 2011.

"The medical school continues the exceptional legacy in Kalamazoo of innovation in the life sciences," says Dr. Hal Jenson, founding dean of the new medical school. "Our graduates will continue in the footsteps of Homer Stryker and will excel as clinicians, leaders, educators, researchers, leaders and advocates."

In planning since 2008, the new medical school was granted preliminary accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education in October 2012. The school is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation supported by private gifts, clinical revenue, research activity, tuition from students and endowment income. In addition to its new W.E. Upjohn M.D. Campus, the school includes the WMU School of Medicine Clinics on Oakland Drive, immediately adjacent to the University's main campus.

"Let me simply tell our donors that you have our profound gratitude," Jenson said.

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