Historical Highlights of the MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA



1828

■ Dr. Milton Antony leads the effort and the Georgia legislature charters the Medical Academy of Georgia, the founding entity of Georgia Regents University on Dec. 20 and authorizes it to award a Bachelor of Medicine degree. MCG is the 13th oldest U.S. medical school and the sixth public medical school to be established.

1829 I

- Dr. Lewis D. Ford is selected as first dean. There are three faculty and seven students, and classes are held in the city hospital.
- The state legislature changes the name of the academy to the Medical Institute of Georgia and authorizes it to award the doctorate of medicine.

1832 I

■ 27 students enter MCG and faculty grow to six. Tuition is \$100.

1833

- The first M.D. degrees are conferred on four graduates.
- The state legislature changes the institution's name to the Medical College of Georgia.

1835

■ The Medical College occupies its first dedicated home on Telfair Street. The trustees of the Academy of Richmond County conveyed land for the facility, which was called "the most beautiful and up-to-date medical college building in the United States," in an MCG history, written by S. Joseph Lewis Jr. with contributions from Dr. Lois T. Ellison.

1837 I

■ Dr. Antony begins and serves as the first editor of the Southern Medical and Surgical Journal, edited and published by MCG faculty.

1849

■ The Medical Association of Georgia is created. Dr. Ford serves as its first president. Since its inception, 45 MCG alumni have served as MAG president.

1850

■ Dr. Paul Eve, professor of surgery and later dean, performs the nation's first hysterectomy.

1861-65

■ Classes are suspended during the Civil War while the building serves as headquarters for Confederate surgeons, and at times, as a hospital

1873

■ Agreement made for affiliation with the University of Georgia, though separate governance and financing are maintained. The name is changed to the Medical Department of the University of Georgia

1888 |

■ The first residency program begins at City Hospital when faculty decide to appoint the first student in each class as house physician at the hospital upon graduating.

1891

■ The MCG Alumni Association is organized. The first annual meeting is held the next year.

1900 I

■ Fourth year made a requirement for medical degree. First two years devoted to basic sciences with later two emphasizing clinical.

1907

■ MCG fields its first football team, which lasts until 1910.

1911 I

■ The University of Georgia takes control of property under a single board of trustees, and academic program comes under UGA direction, though the school remains in Augusta.

1913

■ Classes move to the Newton Building on 13th Street, which had previously served as the Augusta Orphanage Asylum.

1915 I

■ University Hospital, built by the City of Augusta, opens as the teaching hospital for the Medical Department, replacing the Lamar and City Hospitals.

1920

■ The earliest class ring with the skull and crossbones representing MCG belongs to H.G. Weaver, class of 1920. MCG graduates can still purchase a ring with the same design.

1921

■ The first female, Loree Florence, is admitted to MCG. She graduates in 1926. Dr. Florence worked as a lab technician, and this prevented her from taking a full schedule and graduating in four years.

1923

■ Dr. Virgil P. Sydenstricker publishes the first case report of sickle cell anemia, which includes autopsy findings.

1926

■ MCG charters a chapter of the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical honor society, making it the oldest chapter in Georgia and the 29th oldest chapter in the country.

1928

■ Centennial celebration with guest speaker Dr. Lamartine Hardman, MCG Class of 1876, and Governor of Georgia.

1931

■ The fund for the first MCG endowed chair, the Leon Henri Charbonnier Endowed Chair, is approved by the University System of Georgia. The chair is fully funded in 1961.

1933

■ Due to the Great Depression, the Board of Regents closes the Medical Department. However, due to outcry from alumni and citizens across the state, along with the support of Gov. Eugene Talmadge, regents reinstate the Medical Department, renaming it the University of Georgia School of Medicine.

1937

■ Basic science classrooms and labs find a home with the construction of the Dugas Building, named in honor of former dean, Dr. Louis Alexander Dugas.

1939

- The Murphey Building, a classroom building named for Dr. Eugene Murphey, former chairman of the Department of Pathology, opens.
- Dr. Virgil P. Sydenstricker is nominated for a Nobel Prize in Physiology and/or Medicine for his research on the use of nicotinic acid in pellagra therapy.

1942

■ To aid the WWII effort, the medical school begins a three- instead of four-year accelerated program to graduate a class every nine months.

1946

■ Students begin publishing The Cadaver newspaper and, the following year, The Aesculapian yearbook.

Mid 1940's I

■ Dr. William Hamilton invents the Hamilton Manometer, which paves the way for cardiac catheterization.

1948

■ Dr. Raymond P. Ahlquist publishes research that lays the groundwork for beta blocking drugs. He later becomes the first Albert Lasker Award for Clinical Medical Research awardee from MCG.

1950

■ The Board of Regents make the medical school an independent unit of the University System of Georgia, restoring the name Medical College of Georgia and changing the executive title from dean to president. Dr. G. Lombard Kelly, a 1924 MCG alum and dean, serves as first president.

1951

■ The legislature authorizes a state teaching hospital and names it for the late Gov. Eugene Talmadge.

1954

- Five physicians contribute private funds to help form the MCG Foundation.
- First full-time appointments of faculty in the clinical sciences.

1955

■ The first appeal for alumni support is mailed. Alumni contributions from this request total \$4,795. With these donations, the trustees inaugurate the first endowment fund for the MCG Foundation.

1956

- Eugene Talmadge Memorial Hospital opens as MCG's teaching hospital, making it an academic medical center.
- The first open-heart bypass surgery in Georgia is performed at MCG by Dr. Robert G. Ellison.

1957

■ Drs. Hervey Cleckley and Corbett Thigpen present the first case study documenting a patient displaying more than two personalities, resulting in the book and movie "The Three Faces of Eve."

1963

- The first freestanding library opens, later named for prominent MCG physician, scientist and faculty member, Dr. Robert B. Greenblatt.
- The PhD in biomedical sciences program begins.
- A new feature, Research Day for Students, is introduced in March and was so successful that it became an annual affair.

1967 I

■ MCG integrates, admitting its first African-American students, Drs. Frank M. Rumph and John T. Harper. They graduate in 1971.

1971

■ The Virgil P. Sydenstricker Endowed Chair is inaugurated as the first named endowed chair by the MCG Foundation. The chair is fully funded and approved by the Board of Regents in 2001.

1973 I

■ The first Leon Henri Charbonnier Endowed Chairs go to Dr. Sam Singal in basic sciences and Dr. Robert Ellison in clinical sciences.

1977

■ The first Hooding Ceremony is held.

1978

■ Celebration of Sesquicentennial, 150 years of history and achievements. As part of the celebration, the first official alumni reunion is held.

1988

■ Due to the building's historical significance and architectural distinction, the Old Medical College is listed on the National Register of Historic Places with the National Park Service.

1992

- Dr. Robert Adams, neurologist, and Dr. Virgil C. McKie, pediatric hematologist/oncologist, identify painless transcranial Doppler as the first noninvasive method for identifying children with sickle cell disease who also are at risk for stroke. Their later studies show that regular blood transfusions could significantly reduce their stroke risk and help change sickle cell treatment for children.
- The GRA Eminent Scholar Chair in Telemedicine, established through contributions from Augustan George Weiss and a match from the Georgia Research Alliance, becomes the first fully funded endowed chair in the MCG Foundation.

1996

■ The first White Coat Ceremony is held.

1997

■ The MCG Foundation receives a gift of more than \$17 million from the estate of George Weiss. At the time, it was the largest single donation ever made to the college.

1998

■ Drs. David Munn and Andrew Mellor identify the enzyme IDO's role in preventing a mother's immune system from rejecting a fetus and find that immune cells can also produce the enzyme. Their subsequent findings show tumors use IDO to protect themselves and lead to a new therapy for cancer.

2000

■ The MD/PhD Program, a joint effort with the University System of Georgia, is founded.

2004

■ A groundbreaking study, led by MCG allergist and immunologist Dr. Dennis Ownby, overturns long-held beliefs and shows that children in homes with dogs and cats actually have less risk of developing allergies and asthma.

2005

- School of Medicine's primary care program is ranked 40th nationwide by US News and World Report.
- The first regional clinical campus in MCG's statewide educational network, The Southwest Campus in Albany, headquartered at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, opens. It becomes a residential campus in 2010, and the first group of students complete two years of clinical rotations there in 2012.

2006

■ MCG increases first-year enrollment from 180 to 190, the first increase since 1974.

2007

- MCG announces plans for the Southeast Campus, a regional clinical campus to be based in Savannah/ Brunswick. The first students begin living and learning there in 2011, and graduate from MCG in 2013.
- The state of Georgia appropriates funds to study expanding medical education. When the FY 2008 state budget is passed, it includes \$2.8 million to expand capacity at MCG.

2008

- In January, Tripp Umbach presents a study and proposal to the Board of Regents on how best to expand medical education. The regents accept the report on Jan. 21.
- The Board of Regents authorize the purchase of Gilbert Manor public housing property, enabling campus expansion. The Augusta Commission provides \$10 million to purchase the property, laying the groundwork for a future academic home for MCG.
- The first MCG Medicine magazine is published in the fall.

2009

- The Board of Regents approves the GRU/UGA Medical Partnership, a second four-year campus of MCG in Athens in association with the University of Georgia. The first 40 students enroll there in 2010, raising MCG's first-year class size to 230 students. The first partnership class graduates in 2014.
- MCG announces plans for the Northwest Campus, a regional clinical campus to be based in Rome. The first students begin living and learning there in 2013 and graduate from MCG in 2015.

2010

- The Board of Regents approve a new governance structure for MCG and its associated hospitals, clinics and physicians in Augusta. As part of the new structure, the MCG president was also appointed as the chairman and CEO of the MCG Health System, as well as the chairman of the existing MCG Health Inc. board.
- The MCG Dean's Diary, a weekly, electronic communication about the people and activities of the medical school, begins.

2011

- Dr. Peter F. Buckley, chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Health Behavior, is named 26th dean.
- Medical student LaShon Sturgis is awarded the Herbert W. Nickens Medical Student Scholarship from the Association of American Medical Colleges, one of five given nationally each year.

2012

- Dr. J. Harold Harrison, a renowned vascular surgeon and a 1948 MCG graduate, and his wife, Sue W. Harrison, pledge \$5.3 million in addition to \$4.7 million already donated to the MCG Foundation in support of the construction of the education commons building, which would be named in his honor.
- Dr. Ruth-Marie "Rhee" Fincher, professor emeritus and inaugural vice dean for academic affairs, receives the Association of American Medical Colleges' Abraham Flexner Award for Distinguished Service to Medical Education.

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2013

- Consolidation of GHSU and Augusta State University create a new university, Georgia Regents University. The name Medical College of Georgia is retained for the medical school, with MCG being the flagship college.
- The MCG Foundation receives a \$66 million gift, through Dr. Harrison's estate, to establish the Fellows Fund for endowed chairs and the first full-tuition scholarships for MCG students.
- The MD/MBA program begins.
- The BS to MD program is founded.
- MCG Advisory Board created.
- The GRU/UGA Medical Partnership Community Health program receives one of the Shining Star Awards presented by the AAMC's Group on Regional Medical Campuses.

2014

- The J. Harold Harrison, M.D. Education Commons, the academic home of MCG, opens in August. Students begin attending classes there in January 2015.
- MCG completes a strategic plan for 2015-2020, "Our 185-Year Legacy and Future: People Make the Place."
- The MCG Foundation's assets reach the \$230 million mark, its highest ever.
- MCG holds its first phonathon.

2015

- MCG has a record 55 endowed chairs.
- ■MCG has nearly \$99 million in extramural grants and contracts, an all-time high.
- Total enrollment makes MCG the 10th largest medical school in the country.
- MCG has graduated 15,551 medical students.
- The MD/MPH program begins.
- Dr. Alan Herline, Class of 1994, returns to MCG as the J. Harold Harrison, M.D. Distinguished University Chair in Surgery, the first endowed chair funded by the Harrison's \$66 million gift.

2028

■ MCG Bicentennial celebration TBA.

gru.edu/mcg/ facebook.com/mcg.aug