WMU renames its medical school after Homer Stryker

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UPDATE: School now honors both of Kalamazoo's medical pioneers

KALAMAZOO, MI – Three years ago, anonymous donors gave Western Michigan University a $100 million gift that made its new medical school possible.

Today, WMU President John Dunn announced that WMU School of Medicine will be named in honor of those donors: Ronda Stryker, granddaughter of Homer Stryker, and her husband, William Johnston, a WMU trustee.

The first class of 50 medical students will be welcomed this fall to the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine, Dunn said to an audience of about 200 people in a ceremony at the College of Health and Human Services. The school is a collaboration involving WMU and Kalamazoo's two teaching hospitals, Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare.

Stryker and Johnston are 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.

"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."

Bobby Hopewell, mayor of Kalamazoo; Ken Miller, a member of the WMU Board of Trustees; Paul Spaude, president and CEO of Borgess Health; Frank Sardone, president and CEO of Bronson Healthcare; William Parfet, chairman and CEO of MPI Research; and Dr. Hal Jenson, founding dean of the medical school were among those in attendance.

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

"Ronda Stryker and Bill Johnston have given our city, state..."
and nation a wonderful gift that honors Homer Stryker in the most appropriate way possible," said Dunn Tuesday. "Their generosity is allowing our community to create a medical school that will enable generations of young people to make their own marks in the same arena he helped revolutionize.

The Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine is the ideal name for a school that is being developed around the principle of medical innovation that serves the needs of patients."

Dunn also announced that the Stryker Corp., the Fortune 500 company founded by Homer Stryker and based in Kalamazoo, has made a "separate and significant" gift to the medical school. He declined to give the amount.

The WMU School of Medicine is being developed in collaboration with Kalamazoo's two teaching hospitals, Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare. Its W.E. Upjohn Campus in downtown Kalamazoo is currently undergoing a $68 million renovation and expansion. The original 330,000-square-foot facility was donated by MPI Research of Mattawan.
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All of the talk about the WMU medical school has me very excited

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