A university is naming its medical school after the founder of a medical industry giant.

Western Michigan University said today the new WMU School of Medicine will be named after Dr. Homer Stryker, the founder of Stryker Corporation in Kalamazoo, a medical equipment maker.

The school is a private partnership between the school and Kalamazoo’s two teaching hospitals, Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare.

The Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine is welcoming its first medical school class this August. The school will be located on the W.E. Upjohn M.D. Campus in downtown Kalamazoo.

Stryker family

The school was named in honor of the orthopedic surgeon and medical device innovator, in gratitude for the then-anonymous $100 million donation made by his granddaughter, Rhonda E. Stryker, and her husband, William D. Johnston, a WMU trustee, nearly three years ago.

Stryker, a member of the Stryker Corporation board and a trustee of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, said her grandfather would be thrilled that the opportunity for medical education is being enhanced in Kalamazoo.

“While he wouldn’t care that the school was named after him, it is without a doubt a fitting and lasting recognition to his contribution to medicine, medical research, innovative products and service to patient health care outcomes,” Stryker said. “We are thrilled to be strong foundational partners in the creation of this new innovative school of medicine.”

Development stages

In 2007, John Dunn, president of WMU, challenged the Kalamazoo community to consider the addition of a medical school, which resulted in the formation of a Medical School Feasibility Committee six weeks later. After collaborative commitments from Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare, the development of the medical school began in earnest.

The seven-story school is 350,000 square feet and undergoing $68 million in renovation and expansion. The original property housed the old Pfizer Building 267 and was donated by William U. Parfet, chairman and
chief executive officer of MPI Research.

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