



WMU medical school's energy and innovation a welcome addition to downtown Kalamazoo (Editorial)

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Kalamazoo Gazette Editorial Board By **Kalamazoo Gazette Editorial Board**

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We extend a heartfelt welcome to the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. Medical School.

The new school, which held its grand opening Thursday afternoon for 1,500 invited guests, is a wonderful physical and educational addition to the Kalamazoo landscape. **The campus itself is a beautiful addition to downtown.** Housed in a building that has had several lives with The Upjohn Co., Pharmacia and Pfizer and was ultimately donated to WMU by MPI Research, it has been reborn through a \$68 million renovation and addition that adds dramatically to downtown.

But, the real excitement comes from what is happening in the school. Establishing itself downtown means that the school ultimately will bring hundreds of medical school students and residents as well as WMU faculty and staff into downtown, where they will study and work — and perhaps live and enjoy their off time.

For a community that has long struggled to build town-gown relationships, this is surely a step toward stronger connections.

What is even more fascinating is the work and learning that will take place in the school. **First-year medical students are excited** about the campus, but they're even more excited about the educational program that the school has developed. With an emphasis on team-based learning, hands-on education in its state-of-the-art virtual hospital, and an emphasis on early and frequent work with real patients — the school is changing the way a generation of doctors will be educated.

The WMU medical school is yet another demonstration of the high level of philanthropy and positive culture of collaboration that marks life in Kalamazoo. The school truly began to take shape with a donation of \$100 million from William Johnston and Ronda Stryker, granddaughter of doctor and inventor Homer Stryker, after whom the school is named. The building was donated to Western by MPI, which is owned by William U. Parfet, great-grandson of W.E. Upjohn, after whom the campus is named. The combined support of Bronson Methodist Hospital and Borgess Medical Center ensures the broadest and richest educational experiences for the WMed School students and residents.

The energy and innovation of the medical school bodes well for the health of downtown Kalamazoo and the entire

region.

*This is an editorial from the Kalamazoo Gazette. For more Kalamazoo Gazette opinion pieces and letters visit **<http://www.mlive.com/opinion/kalamazoo/>**.*

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