

WMU medical school to be named for device inventor Dr. Homer Stryker

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The new medical school at Western Michigan University will be named for a medical device maker with close ties to the Kalamazoo area.

The school will be named the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine. It is named for a Kalamazoo orthopedic surgeon and medical device inventor who founded Stryker Corp.

Ronda E. Stryker, his granddaughter, and her husband William Johnston, a WMU board member, gave an anonymous gift of \$100 million three years ago to get the school started. In announcing the name at a news conference today, WMU also revealed who had given the large gift.

“My grandfather always focused on patient outcomes,” Stryker said. “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. We are thrilled to be strong foundational partners in the creation of this new innovative school of medicine.”

Their gift was praised by WMU officials.

“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,” WMU President John M. Dunn in a news release. “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.”

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 undergoing renovation and scheduled to open in mid-2014. That site was a gift from MPI Research in late 2011. MPI Research is led by William U. Parfet, great grandson of the campus’ namesake, who launched the Upjohn Co. in Kalamazoo in 1886.

In planning since 2008, the new medical school was granted preliminary accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education in October 2012.