



"THIS OLD HOUSE"

A History Of Your Keepsake Brick

Hundreds of hospital employees and staff physicians gathered to watch the beginning of the end of Oklahoma Osteopathic Hospital's original building. At 9:30 AM on July 23, 1981, a wrecking ball began the demolition which made way for the hospital's fifth addition.

Doctors Robert D. McCullough and Howard Baldwin, the only two surviving members of the hospital's original founding board, joined Administrator Jon R. Pirtle near the cab of the giant crane as the wrecking ball made its first connection with the four story brick structure built in 1916.

Before becoming Oklahoma Osteopathic Hospital in 1943, the building housed several hospital operations which were plagued by financial trouble and mismanagement. Initially known as the Oklahoma Hospital in 1916, it was Tulsa's first fully modern fire-proof hospital and a registered training school for nurses. Subsequently, the building was the property of the Delaware Baptist Convention; later converted to a sanitarium; was known as the Tulsa Hospital, and finally operated as the Westside Hospital. By early 1943, the building was seized by mortgage foreclosure through a Federal court action and went on the auction block.

It was war time, and since D.O.'s had been denied military commissions, they necessarily stayed at home as many of their M.D. brethren served in the Armed Forces. This circumstance placed a fortunate burden on the osteopathic profession nationally, as virtually all realized a sudden practice growth. Tulsa was no exception and D.O.'s were rapidly outgrowing their tiny hospital at 14th and Peoria. As a result, the Osteopathic Hospital Founders Association (OHFA) was formed as a nonprofit corporation charged to obtain and operate a hospital to meet the growing needs of Tulsa D.O.'s and their patients. And so, we had physicians needing a home and a home needing physicians.

Doctor Robert D. McCullough, acting on behalf of the OHFA, carried the group's bid of \$35,000 to the courthouse steps on the morning of November 1, 1943. The D.O.'s offered the only bid for the heretofore ill-fated building, and were awarded clear title to the brick structure, half block of land and two nearby frame houses.

Generous personal contributions by Tulsa D.O.'s and a public fund drive made possible the necessary remodeling and equipment purchases which led to the opening of Oklahoma Osteopathic Hospital on December 17, 1944.

The hospital opened its doors with 75 beds and operated at near capacity from the outset.

By 1955, OOH had completed its first addition at a cost of \$500,000. Bed capacity was brought to 105, making it the largest osteopathic institution in the Southwest. Oklahoma Osteopathic became Tulsa's first fully air-conditioned hospital and the first hospital in the city to serve centrally prepared meals.

Patient load and increasing staff numbers made necessary the second addition in 1959, which doubled the bed capacity. Another 100 beds were added in the third expansion which opened in 1966. In July of 1975, the hospital's fourth addition was completed at a cost of \$12 million and brought the bed count to 416.

Today, the osteopathic medical complex which is Oklahoma Osteopathic Hospital is well into its fifth addition. At a cost of \$44 million, the project will be finalized in 1984. The first phase of construction was a four-level parking garage completed in October, 1980; a five story Physician Office Building just north of the hospital was ready for occupancy in May of 1981; demolition of "THIS OLD HOUSE" made way for erection of an 8 story tower; Fall of 1981 will bring construction of a free-standing one day surgery center and the final expansion phase will be new construction and extensive remodeling of the existing central four story structure.

Oklahoma Osteopathic Hospital will open with an increased licensed bed capacity of 445, with shelled-in space available for topping the 550-bed mark. The new hospital addition will boast a beautiful 2 story greenhouse lobby and spacious admitting area, enlarged ancillary services, educational facilities to accommodate rocketing housestaff numbers, new and enlarged critical care units,

expanded space for business and administrative offices as well as tremendous improvement in capabilities for providing patient and visitor conveniences.

It was certainly not without a bit of sadness that the crowd watched "THIS OLD HOUSE" come down. But, at the same time, there was a great deal of joy in visions of the future and faith that the osteopathic profession in Tulsa will continue to grow and support its fine hospital.

"THIS OLD HOUSE" stood proudly and served well. As it gracefully surrendered to the future, each person looking on had their own personal memories of the part it had played in their lives.

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July, 1981*

