



“What a fabulous tradition to be part of!”



Welcome to the third issue of *Medicine at Michigan*.

Last fall was a busy one at the Medical School. The highlight of the season was the October 1 academic convocation held in Hill Auditorium to kick off our sesquicentennial year. The 2,000 guests who attended were able to view our wonderful 15-minute video on the

history of the School. Narrated by CBS-TV journalist and U-M graduate Mike Wallace, it celebrates the School's 150 years of distinction. I opened the ceremony with the following remarks:

“We pay homage today to the legacy entrusted to us, to the scientists, physicians, teachers and researchers, beginning with Regent Zina Pitcher and the first five members of the faculty, Sager, Denton, Douglas, Allen and Gunn, who blazed a path.

“On October 3, 1850, the first medical lecture in the U-M Medical School was presented to 91 students. It was a time before electricity, before natural gas service to Ann Arbor, when Harriet Tubman had just escaped from slavery, Zachary Taylor was the twelfth president of the U.S., and Medical School tuition was five dollars. While we are struck by the contrast in knowledge and technology when compared with today, we find inspiration and challenge in the leadership and vision of the men and women who lived their lives teaching, exploring and healing here in Ann Arbor.

“The Medical School quickly addressed the challenges of its earliest era—cholera and quackery. Ever since, the School's graduates and faculty have taken part in addressing the medical problems of their era. Early accounts in the *Michigan Alumnus* tell of our graduates' service in the Civil War. Dean Victor Vaughan was called on to work with Walter Reed to combat typhus during the Spanish American War. The federal government recruited Frederick Novy to study an outbreak of bubonic plague in San Francisco. (The story of those experiments became the inspiration for Sinclair Lewis's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Arrowsmith*.) Vaughan also studied influenza following the deadly outbreak at the end of World War I. David Murray Cowie solved the goiter problem by persuading salt manufacturers to include iodine in table salt. In World War II, Michigan men and women again responded to the needs of their time and mobilized to join the 298th General Hospital to care for the wounded in the European theater. Michigan played a crucial role in ending the polio epidemics with the work of Thomas Francis in designing the field trials for Jonas Salk's

vaccine. Our leadership continues with the pioneering work of Francis Collins on the Human Genome Project and Gary Nabel's recent departure to the NIH to develop a vaccine for AIDS.

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“There are stories, thousands of stories, that could be told of each one of our graduates and faculty by grateful patients, students, and fellow researchers, people whose lives and work have been touched by Michigan doctors. Today we've invited some very special people connected with the Medical School to share their personal stories and to be honored on this historic day.”

My welcome was followed by reminiscences and observations on the School and its place in the medical world by a series of distinguished speakers, including Keith Black, a graduate of our School and a neurosurgeon in Los Angeles, representing medical students; David Botstein, chair of Stanford's Department of Genetics and a former Ph.D. student, representing graduate students; William Hubbard, the tenth dean of the Medical School, representing the School's administration; Erik Morganroth, who underwent a heart transplant at U-M Hospital, representing the many patients we have cared for; Antonia Novello, former pediatrics resident here and former U.S. surgeon general, representing house officers; and Harold Shapiro, former president of the University, who recounted the fascinating challenges of building the new University Hospital. Gil Omenn, executive vice president for health affairs, and President Lee Bollinger commented on contemporary issues that confront our School and voiced our hopes for the future. Jack Dixon, the Minor J. Coon Professor and chair of the Department of Biological Chemistry, and James Stanley, professor and section chief of Vascular Surgery, did a superb job guiding the ceremony and introducing the speakers. (There are photos of the convocation on pages 44-47 that you should be sure to take time to enjoy.)

The culmination of our year-long celebration of the Medical School Sesquicentennial will take place on October 13-14, 2000, at our annual Alumni Reunion Weekend. I hope to see you this October in Ann Arbor!

Sincerely,

Allen S. Lichter, M.D.
Dean