

Intros for 3 speeches at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (2)

Dedication speech at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

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When the Children's Hospital finally moved from the South Philadelphia at its Bainbridge Street location to the campus of the University of Pennsylvania, it was not just that a hospital had moved from one community to another, but there were real questions about the ability of the new Children's Hospital to support the building, attract sufficient number of patients to make that possible, and to settle the unrest in the minority communities that, perhaps, the Children's Hospital had lost its first love, namely, caring for the poor and underprivileged of the city, and would now be inaccessible only to those who were not affluent. The way that worked out, to the benefit of the community, is covered elsewhere in this archive.

The new Children's Hospital built on 34<sup>th</sup> Street opposite Philadelphia's Convention Hall was in 1974 the most expensive building ever built in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It was architectural delight with a seven-story atrium in the center of the building and its construction was an engineering marvel. The water table, because of the proximity of the building site to the Schuylkill River, was very high, demanding that the hospital be built like the hull of a ship, nestling below the water table with thousands of cubic yards of concrete protecting the almost unimaginable machinery that made the hospital function was housed in two levels below ground. For example, the water pipes carried to various parts of the hospitals, including the laboratories, seven different kinds of water.

I have said before that this was the first and the oldest children's hospital in America, it was also the second oldest children's hospital in the English speaking world, with the distinction of being number one going to The Hospital for Children situated on Great Ormond Street in London. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital had always maintained a cordial relationship, and I, for twelve years was the only American who sat on the Council of the British Association of Paediatric Surgeons. Being an Anglophile of long standing, I was delighted to eventually be an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of London, an Honorary Fellow of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, and an Honorary Member of the Royal Society of Medicine. The two institutions exchanged residents and fellows on appropriate occasions as part of our united effort of providing the best education for residents in every aspect of pediatrics, including surgery. At the time of dedicating the new building it was only natural that we invite people from the Children's Hospital on Great Ormond Street. The member of the Royal Family, who, at that time was the patroness of the Great Ormond Street Hospital, was Princess Margaret. She arrived for the dedication with her husband, Lord Snowdon and was accompanied by the wife of the Ambassador to the United States from the Court of St. James, Lady Ramsbothem. The accompanying photograph is an informal one taken of some of us who had participated in the program on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1974. I am seen chatting with Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon. Left to right in the background: Ambassador to the court of St. James, Walter Annenberg, United States Senator, Hugh.D. Scott,

Chairman of the Board, William L. van Alen, and Pennsylvania Governor, Milton J. Shapp. On the far right, is Philadelphia Mayor, Frank D. Rizzo.

When the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children opened in London, it had the good fortune to have Charles Dickens himself as a fund-raiser. I opened my speech with reference to him and his activities for children, including his tours in the United States raising money for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. I liked to think that the citizens of Philadelphia had been generous in providing funds to build that hospital long before we thought of one in the United States.

Then having raised image of Charles Dickens, I used the opening to his book, "The Tale of Two Cities", and I reminded the audience that it was the best of times to start a Children's Hospital in a new locality and the worst of times.

Although, it is not mentioned in the speech, the things that were in my mind as I talked were such things as supporting the most expensive building ever built in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, animal quarters so lavish in stainless steel that we hesitated to take the press on its tour through that part of the building, an electric bill for the first month of operation of the hospital that was the highest utility bill ever sent to any customer in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (after that bill came, every other light bulb, incandescent or fluorescent was removed from its socket). It was a good statement of the times in the United States in reference to the advancement of medicine. None of the downsides of the future came to pass, because the Children's Hospital, better than any in Philadelphia weathered the storm of economic concern and indeed expanded and continues to do so to this date (2003). U.S. News and World Report in 2003 called the best Children's Hospital in America.