
The School of Medicine's Budget Crisis, 28 Years Ago

By Dean Bob Daugherty

Editors note: This year commemorates the fortieth year since Governor Paul Laxalt signed the bill on March 25, 1969, establishing the medical school. Since that time we have had eight deans with tenures varying from two years to Dr. Bob Daugherty's nineteen years. The following article is Dr. Daugherty's reminiscence about his first year at the School of Medicine and the challenges.

Twenty-eight years ago in January 1981, I flew into Reno on a sunny cold Sunday from Indiana to meet with acting Dean Mazzaferri and his staff, including financial officers, to review the School of Medicine's 1981-83 budget request to the legislature. The state budget office had already reduced the budget, and we knew a fight was coming. Like the 2008-9 financial situation, 1981 was a time of economic recession. The following Monday at 6:00 AM, President Joe Crowley and I drove to Carson City for my presentation of the medical school's budget to the Nevada Assembly Ways and Means Committee. Chairman Roger

Bremner called the meeting to order and President Crowley introduced me as the new dean. He said more nice things about me in that introduction than he would ever say again.

I started my budget presentation, and no more than two minutes later I was interrupted by someone, who said, "When did we decide to have a medical school?" This was followed by Committee Member Robert Robinson, "This medical school is an albatross around the neck of the state. We would save money by buying every medical student a Ferrari and sending them out of state." He was quickly followed by Member Jack Verglies, "Dr Daugherty, I

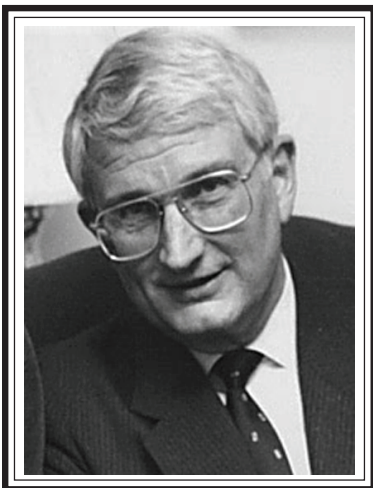
sure hope you haven't sold your house in Indiana." This statement was followed by the chairman, "I sure hope you haven't bought a house in Nevada."

Without hesitation, Mr. Bob Cashell, Chairman of the Board of Regents at the University stood and said, "If I was in the legislature, I wouldn't have voted for the medical school either." I heard the quiet voice of President Crowley behind me, "Bob, sit down. Bob, sit down." I sat down and chairman Bremner adjourned the committee. Everyone in the room left except me: I sat there somewhat amused by what had happened.

I have told this story to a number of folks over the years.

They often look horrified and comment, "How awful, how devastating." However, this experience reminded me of my Wyoming experience some five years earlier. I was hired by the University of Wyoming in 1976 to start a new medical school in Laramie. In my experiences with the Wyoming Legislature, I found that many of the legislators were surprised to learn that the University of Wyoming had approved the funding of the new school. That experience taught me that there is always another day in dealing with the legislative process.

Thus, as I sat in the Nevada Assembly committee room that cold January 1981 day, I reflected on my political education in Wyoming. I realized that the next step was going to be up to me and me alone. After all, the President and the Chairman of the Board of Regents not only had not defended the medical school, but they had left the room. What should I do? In the preceding six months, as I visited Reno and the state, I met many physicians, legislators, and community leaders. I had



Dean
Robert Daugherty

accepted the deanship because I felt there was sufficient support of the school despite much vocal opposition. On one of these visits, I met Mr. Bob Barengo, Speaker of the Assembly from Reno. Dr. Bob Clift, a local Reno physician on the search committee, introduced me to him. In fact, Dr. Clift was the only community physician on the committee. He described himself as the "token doc" on the search committee. Bob Clift and I developed mutual respect, which was assisted by the fact that we had both graduated from the Kansas University School of Medicine.

Furthermore, I knew from my Wyoming experience that the speaker of the assembly appointed the standing committees of the assembly, which include the Ways and Means Committee where I had just met my apparent demise! Therefore, I decided to pay Speaker Barengo a visit. In those days in the Nevada Legislature it was easy and comfortable to walk into a legislators' office and visit or seek help. As I walked into the speaker's office he met me with a smile and a hearty, "Hi Dean, how are you and welcome."

I responded that I was fine, but I had a question. "It is my understanding that you, as Speaker, appoint the committee chairs in the assembly. Is that correct?" Mr. Barengo responded, "Yes." I immediately responded, "I think you owe me one." I then described what had transpired in the Ways and Means Committee

hearing.

The Speaker looked at me and asked with a slight smile, "Do you need any funds for Las Vegas?" I responded, "Yes, what should it be?" Barengo, "You decide but get it to me by tomorrow." Needless to say, I presented a Las Vegas budget of \$400,000 to him. When I returned, he said, "Dean, your budget will be approved, all of it, including the Las Vegas funds."

I learned my first and most important political Nevada lesson. Always include both Reno and Las Vegas in my requests to the legislature. I also learned that rural Nevada was another priority. On the other hand, by the time I left my deanship, nineteen years later, rural Nevada was my priority, but it no longer was the legislature's priority.

In the remaining days and weeks of the 1981 legislative session, I spend much face-to-face time with members of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee. As a result, by the next legislative session, Mr. Bremner had become supportive of the school. However, it was not always evident because he had his own way of helping. Another member also had a unique way of helping. Mr. Vergiels, never voted for us, but he never voted against us. Other members were never supportive. For example, Mr. Robinson was consistently against any of our proposals for the length of his legislature tenure.

Little did I realize that this initial Nevada political education would carry me through

nine more sessions. The School of Medicine and I enjoyed good support from the succeeding legislative leaders over the following nineteen years, giving us the opportunity to provide Nevada's best and brightest students an excellent medical education—second to none in the country.

Drs. Ada & Gideon Weed: **Early Reformers and Practitioners of Hydropathic Medicine in 1861 Nevada**

By Kristin Sohn Fermoile

(Continued from Greasewood XIX Fall 2008)

In 1869, at the age of 36, Gideon returned to school and received 18 weeks of allopathic training at Rush Medical College in Chicago. This marked a turning point for the couple, as their success and status greatly improved, and they were no longer met with strong opposition. In 1870, they moved to Seattle, where Gideon practiced as a physician and surgeon. He enjoyed a lucrative practice and refocused his reform energies on improving healthcare conditions. In 1874 he founded the Seattle Hospital to improve medical care for those injured in the logging camps and saw mills around the area. He provided medical care to indigent, was active in various medical societies, assisted in creating the State Medical Board, and helped secure funds to start a medical school. During two terms as mayor, he was able to pass many reforms and earn respect from fellow citizens. In fact, he was the first mayor to succeed at



Adaline and Gideon Weed They were in their early 20's when they came to Nevada. Photo courtesy of Oregon Historical Quarter.

reelection.

Mrs. Weed did not continue to practice medicine after their move to Seattle. Furthermore, neither Weed advertised their hydropathic degrees or continued lecturing.

Gideon's medical practice, along with wise real estate investments, allowed the couple to maintain a high quality of life. They built a mansion in 1876 and raised two children, Benjamin and Mabel. Ada became somewhat of a society lady. She hosted social events at their mansion, served as director of the Library Association, represented the Plymouth Congregational Church, and supported charities. She continued to push for women's rights, but she allied with the local temperance movement and shunned the more dramatic suffragists. Additionally, she assisted her husband in his medical reform activities.

While in Seattle, the Weeds were very successful in their medical and social

reform activities. Their newfound traditional methods were in stark contrast to the previous methods they had utilized while in Oregon and California. They garnered significant respect from the citizens of Washington, and they avoided the criticism and opposition they had received during previous crusades. A detailed article ran in Seattle's *Pacific Tribune* on October 25, 1877, which described their twentieth wedding anniversary. They received valuable china pieces as gifts from other prominent citizens, which testified to their important position in their community.

In 1890 the Weeds moved to Berkeley, where Gideon continued to practice traditional medicine and the children attended the University of California. The couple's nephew, Dr. Park Weed Willis, an allopathic physician trained at the University of Pennsylvania, took over Gideon's Seattle medical practice. Ada continued to be active in social causes, and she assisted victims of the San Francisco

earthquake. In her final years, she nursed her paralytic husband and continued to practice her hydropathic beliefs. She suffered from a variety of physical ailments and continued to drink large amounts of water, self-treatment of which her nephew approved. She died of cancer in 1910.

* Editor's Note: Various sources list Gideon Weed as practicing in Nevada from 1860 to 1867. Unfortunately, Ada is not listed in any of the same sources. If she was practicing in the state in 1860, she would be Nevada's earliest known woman doctor.

Edwards, Thomas G. (1977). Dr. Ada M. Weed: Northwest Reformer. Oregon Historical Quarterly, 78(1),5-40

In Memoriam

Greasewood Tablettes was founded to preserve medical history. Unfortunately, we do not have the means to keep abreast of the lives of all healthcare practitioners. If we inadvertently miss a particular obituary, we invite you to send us a copy of a newspaper obituary.

Claudette M. Edmiston, RN

Claudette will always be remembered for her cheerful attitude and leadership role during her forty-two years as a Washoe Medical Center (now known as Renown) Operating

Room nurse. She was married to Dr. Malcolm Edmiston, the first Chairman of Surgery at the University of Nevada School of Medicine. Claudette was born in Reno in 1939 and died March 23, 2009.

David E. Williams, MD

Dr. Williams, a Reno anesthesiologist, was a strong supporter of the School of Medicine's history of medicine program and gave numerous artifacts to its museum. David is remembered for his skill and professionalism. He was born in California in 1926 and practiced in Reno since 1957. Dr. Williams died in Reno November 21, 2008.

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