
130 Years of Leadership: Images of the Deans of the College of Medicine 1881-2010

2015

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Recommended Citation

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130 Years of Leadership

Images of the Deans of the College of Medicine: 1881 - 2010

Robert Wigton, M.D., M.S.



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C.W.M. Poynter with his anatomy class 1910.

Introduction

When I joined the College of Medicine faculty, I became interested in the photographs of previous deans of the college displayed on a conference room wall. There was no information, however, about any of the deans and I was curious about their careers and accomplishments. Much later I began this project to research each of them, find a photo from the time they were dean, write a concise biography, and add a photo representative of the college during that era. What I found was a distinguished group of scholars, many of whom, even in the early years, were highly regarded nationally and internationally for research and leadership.

Throughout the history of the College of Medicine, the deans presided over a rapidly changing institution. At the beginning (1881) deans of the Omaha Medical College (then called president of the faculty) presided over a proprietary college with 35 medical students and 15 faculty members. By 1902, when the college affiliated with the University of Nebraska, there were 152 medical students and 52 faculty. When the college moved to its current location on 42nd Street and the University of Nebraska Hospital was built, the deans' responsibilities expanded to include running the hospital and, soon thereafter, a nursing school. The college continued to grow so that by 1950 there were 315 medical students, 165 faculty, 65 residents and interns and a college of allied health. In 1968, the University of Nebraska Medical Center was created and the dean answered to the chancellor of the medical center. Research, education, and clinical activities increased and by today (2015) the College of Medicine has 502 medical students, 794 faculty and over 500 residents. The dean's job has changed but the college continues to find highly talented, visionary, and accomplished leaders to fill the role.

Robert Wigton M.D., M.S.
Professor of Internal Medicine
Assistant Dean for Special Projects
April 15, 2015



Before opening a medical college, the faculty (larger circles) offered a preparatory year. Classes were held in two rented rooms at 13th and Farnam Streets. Some students sought preparation for medical school and others already in practice came for a review course.



Robert R. Livingston, M.D.

Dean, 1881 - 1885

Robert Ramsay Livingston, M.D. (1827-1888), a pioneer Nebraska physician, was a founder of the Omaha Medical College. He was the first president of the faculty (dean), and taught the principles and practice of surgery until 1885.

Born in Montreal, Quebec, he received the M.D. degree from McGill University in 1849 and did postgraduate studies at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York. In 1859, he came to Plattsmouth, Nebraska Territory, to practice. At the start of the Civil War, he organized the first company of volunteer infantry in the Nebraska Territory: Company A, First Nebraska Volunteers. Elected captain, he led the company in the battles of Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Corinth, and many others. By 1865 he had achieved the rank of brevet brigadier general. After the war, he returned to Plattsmouth to practice. He helped to organize the State Medical Society, serving as president in 1871-72.

In 1888, he died of cholera, contracted while on a health inspection in Plattsmouth. He fathered four sons, three of whom became physicians. Two of his sons, Theodore P. Livingston (OMC class of 1885), and J. Stuart Livingston (OMC class of 1898), took over their father's medical practice in Plattsmouth.



The Omaha Medical College in 1887. This wooden structure at 12th and Pacific housed laboratories, dissecting rooms, an auditorium, and a dispensary (stairs at right). Dr. William Milroy, a nationally known member of the faculty, is on the porch. This is now the site of the downtown Omaha Post Office.



Jacob C. Denise, M.D.

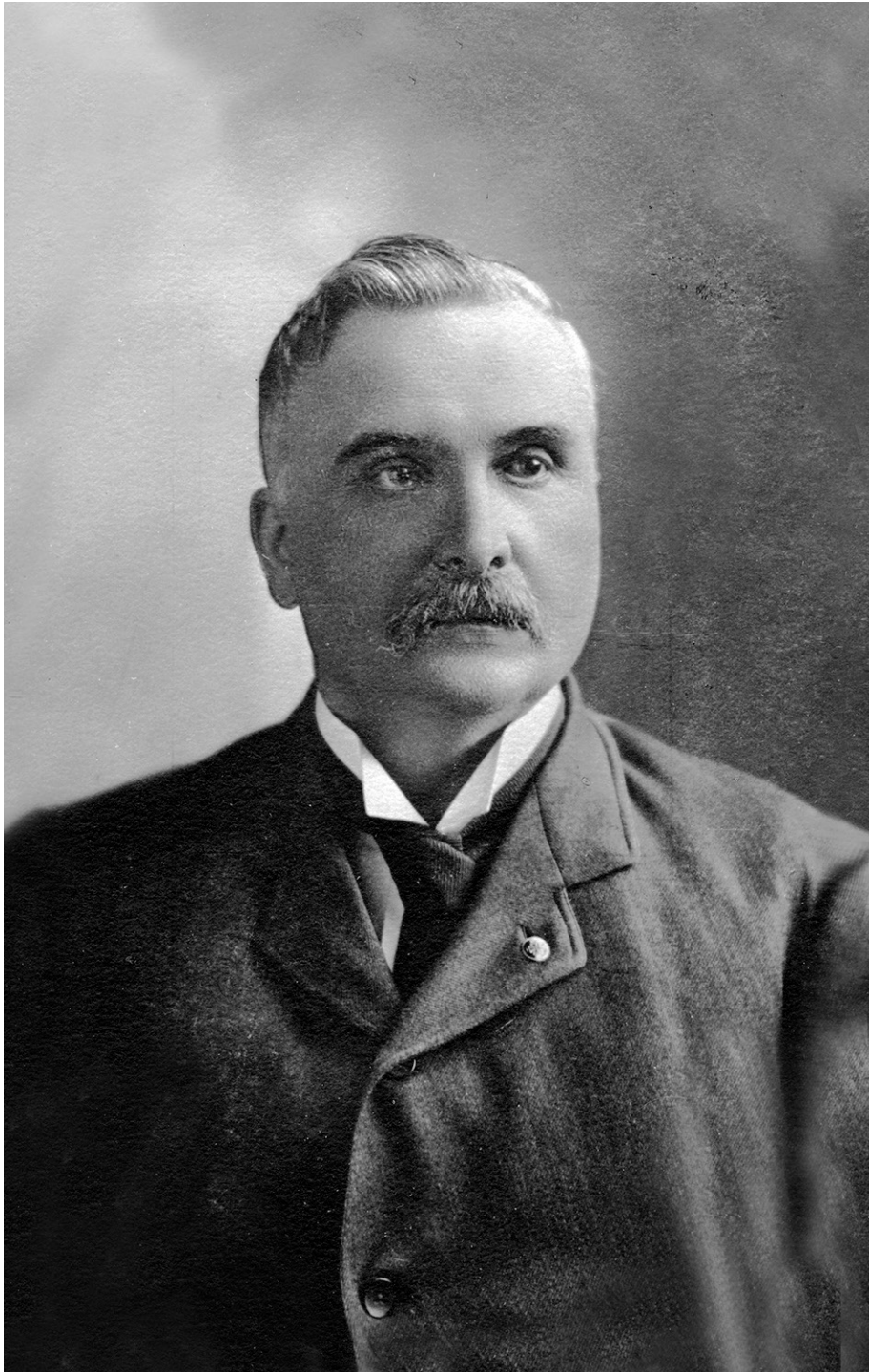
Dean, 1885 - 1889 and 1893 -1895

Jacob C. Denise, M.D. (1828-1899) was a founder of the Omaha Medical College and taught there for many years. He was born in Miami Township, Ohio, and graduated in 1855 from the Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. He practiced in Dayton, Ohio, until 1861, when he was appointed assistant surgeon of the 27th Ohio Volunteers, promoted to surgeon in 1863. In 1868, he moved to Omaha and set up practice, with special attention to diseases of the eye and ear.

At the Medical College, he was professor of physiology and clinical lecturer on diseases of the eye and ear. He served as dean for two terms, from 1885 to 1889, and again from 1893 to 1895. He was active in medical affairs at the local and state level and was one of the organizers of the Nebraska State Medical Society. He was highly regarded for his medical knowledge and ethics.



Medical Students from the classes of 1891-93 pose in front of the new medical college building. With a decade of success behind it, the college replaced the old frame structure with a new brick and masonry building on the same site.



Donald Macrae, M.D.

Dean, 1889 – 1893

Donald Macrae (1839-1907), the son of a clergyman, was born in Ross Shire, Scotland. In 1861, he graduated from the University of Edinburgh. After crossing the Atlantic 75 times as a surgeon for the Cunard Steamship Line, he married Charlotte Douchette, a Canadian, and settled in Council Bluffs to practice in 1867. He was a popular and successful physician and practiced there for forty years.

He joined the original faculty of the Omaha Medical College as professor of the principles and practice of medicine. In 1889, he became dean of the faculty. He also was president of the Iowa State Medical Society and the Missouri Valley Medical Society.

His character is described in *The History of Medicine in Iowa*: "Dr. Macrae inherited from his Scotch ancestors the uncompromising tendencies of his race. No personal advantage would lead him to swerve from the lines of right and justice, either in relation to his profession or in relation to his civic or social duties. He was charitable to his brother physicians, but would never compromise with wrong doing or dishonest methods." His son, Donald practiced medicine with his father and distinguished himself in his practice and in community service. His son served two terms as mayor of Council Bluffs and had a distinguished military career in the First World War.



When completed in 1892, the Douglas County Hospital at 40th and Poppleton Streets became the main teaching hospital of the Medical College. The current Douglas County Hospital was built in 1931.



Harold G. Gifford, Sr., M.D.

Dean, 1895 - 1898, Associate Dean, 1902 - 1911

Harold G. Gifford, Sr., M.D., (1858-1929), was one of Omaha's preeminent physicians. He was an internationally known ophthalmologist, a highly respected teacher at the medical college, and an important community leader and philanthropist.

Born in Milwaukee, he graduated from Cornell University and received his M.D. from the University of Michigan in 1882. After an additional year at Michigan, he trained in ophthalmology in Europe and New York. His marriage to Mary Louise Millard, daughter of an Omaha banker, brought him to Omaha in 1886. He and his partner established the Nebraska Eye and Ear Infirmary, and later donated the building to house the original Methodist Hospital. He was an authority on trachoma and sympathetic ophthalmia and published 104 scientific papers

Dr. Gifford joined the faculty of the Omaha Medical College in 1887. He was dean from 1895 to 1898 and later was associate dean of the Omaha campus of the new University of Nebraska College of Medicine from 1902 to 1911. He was largely responsible for choosing the site of the new campus at 42nd Street.

He was known for his community and philanthropic work. He quietly assisted the poor and gave freely to support the community. He donated land for Fontenelle Forest and Gifford Park in Omaha. His son Sanford became chair of ophthalmology at Northwestern University and his other son Harold Jr. was chair of ophthalmology at the Nebraska College of Medicine.



Dr. Jonas' Surgical Clinic in 1894. Unlike today, selected surgical operations were performed in the medical college amphitheater with the surgeon lecturing to students as the operation progressed.



August Frederick Jonas, M.D.

Dean, 1898 - 1902

August Frederick Jonas (1858 - 1934) was the last dean of the Omaha Medical College before the merger with the University of Nebraska in 1902. He was a leading advocate for the affiliation and in favor of locating all medical college programs and courses in Omaha. He was among the first trained surgeons in Omaha and was professor of surgery at the Medical College from 1892 to his retirement in 1929. Dr. Jonas' lectures and clinics were highly prized by students for his surgical skill and teaching.

He was born in Arlington, Wis., and at the age of 14 studied medicine with Dr. A. T. Koch. He graduated from the Bennett Medical College (later Loyola) in Chicago in 1877. He then studied at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, and took post-graduate work in surgery in Vienna, Berlin, and Paris.

Dr. Jonas organized the surgical department of Methodist Hospital and was its first chief surgeon. In 1898 he became the first chief surgeon of the Union Pacific Railroad and remained in this post for 27 years. He was a member and officer of many national and international medical societies and a frequent contributor to the medical literature.

In 1889, Jonas married Dr. Metha Helfritz, a graduate of the Women's Medical College of Chicago. Dr. Helfritz died following surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1895. He later married Jessica Stebbens of Omaha in 1907.



The class of 1905, the last class to start at the Omaha Medical College. The next 10 classes had their first two basic science years in Lincoln and the last two clinical years in Omaha. After that, all four years were taught in Omaha.



Henry Baldwin Ward, Ph.D.

Dean, 1902 - 1910

Henry Baldwin Ward (1865 - 1945) was an internationally known parasitologist. As a faculty member at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, he had helped create the two-year premedical course. When the Omaha Medical College affiliated with the university in 1902, he became dean of the new University of Nebraska College of Medicine. From 1902 to 1913, the first two years were held in Lincoln and the last two in Omaha. By 1909, Ward realized he would not continue as dean after all four years moved to the Omaha campus. He left in 1910 to head the department of zoology at the University of Illinois, where he remained until his retirement in 1933.

Ward was born in Troy, N.Y., into a family of highly regarded scientists: His father was a microscopist and his aunt had explored farther North than any other American woman. Ward graduated from Williams College, taught high school, then did postgraduate study in Europe. He returned for his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1892, then joined the faculty in zoology at the University of Nebraska

Besides many papers on parasites, he co-authored a standard text, *Fresh Water Biology* in 1918. An early conservationist, Ward was deeply concerned with wildlife conservation and stream pollution. Today, the highest award given in parasitology is the Henry Baldwin Ward Medal.



The old Omaha Medical College building at 12th and Pacific Streets shown six years after the move to 42nd Street. The camera is looking NNW toward downtown Omaha. The move to the new western campus provided the needed space for the expansion of teaching, laboratories, and a university hospital.



Robert H. Wolcott, A.M., M.D.
Acting Dean, University of Nebraska,
College of Medicine
~ 1910-1913 ~

Robert H. Wolcott, M.D.

Acting Dean, 1910 - 1913

Robert H. Wolcott (1868 – 1934) was the last of the Lincoln-based deans appointed before the move to 42nd Street. He had helped develop the pre-medical courses at the University in Lincoln and was acting dean when Dr. Ward left in 1910.

Born in Alton, IL., he developed an early interest in zoology and published his first article about birds at age 16. He received the bachelor of law degree from the University of Michigan in 1890, the B.S. in 1892 and the M.D. in 1893. He never practiced law or medicine, but returned to his love of biology and the study of birds and insects. He continued graduate studies in zoology at the University of Nebraska and later joined the faculty. After his acting deanship, he stayed in Lincoln as professor of zoology until his death in 1934.

Dr. Wolcott wrote many articles on Nebraska birds and founded the Nebraska Ornithological Club in 1899. Later, the club joined with an Omaha birding organization to become the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union. He served as president of the organization and was re-elected on three separate years. He made many contributions to biology and ornithology and authored a widely used textbook in introductory biology.



The first building of the College of Medicine at 42nd and Dewey Avenue. After years of debate, the legislature appropriated money for the land and this building. It housed laboratories, offices, an auditorium, and library. Later renamed Poynter Hall, it continues to be used for teaching and research.



Willson O. Bridges, M.D.

Dean, 1913 - 1915

Willson Orton Bridges (1856 – 1938) was a prominent Omaha physician who served as associate dean for the Omaha campus following the 1902 merger with the University of Nebraska and helped persuade the legislature to buy land for the campus at the west edge of town. He later became dean and presided over the move to the new campus in 1913. His appointment signaled the transition from Lincoln professors (Drs. Ward and Wolcott) to the Omaha M.D. faculty for leadership of the College of Medicine.

Born in Coteau Landing, Quebec, in 1856, he received his M.D. degree from the University of New York in 1879. He did postgraduate studies in Vienna, Munich, Berlin, and London. He came to Omaha in 1888, where he joined the faculty of the Omaha Medical College. In 1903 he became chair of the department of medicine (1903-1920). His was a prominent medical family: His brother Edson L. Bridges and his nephew Willson Moody both followed him, in turn, as chairmen of the department of internal medicine.

He was a highly respected practitioner who contributed quietly in major ways to the community. He was active in the Nebraska Medical Association and was elected president in 1898. In 1927, he was the 34th King of Aksarben and the first physician to be so honored.



Aerial view of the campus in 1928 showing campus expansion: The North Building, South Building, University Hospital Units I and II, Conkling Hall nurses dormitory and the heating plant.



Irving S. Cutter, M.D.

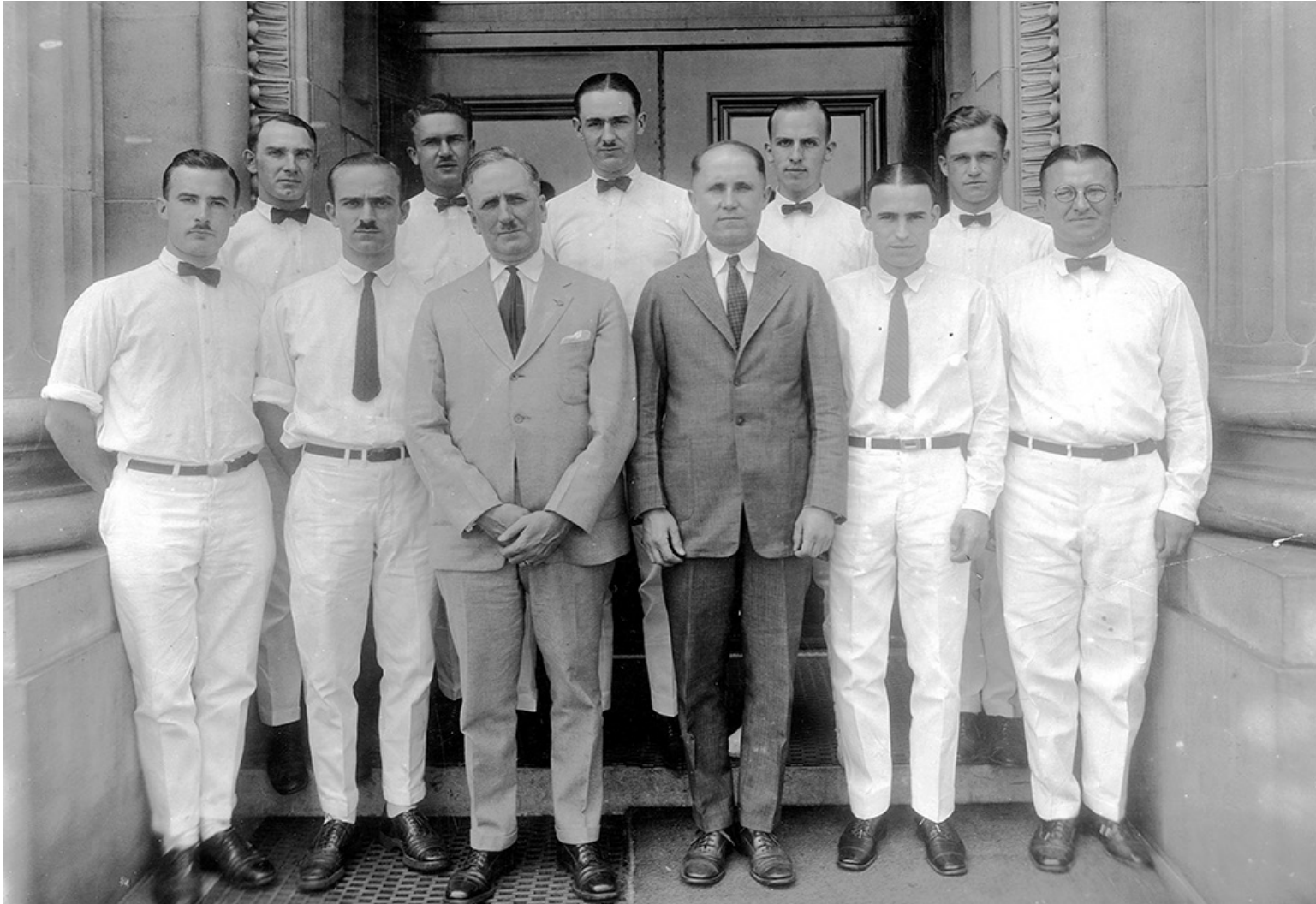
Dean, 1915 - 1924

Irving Samuel Cutter (1875 - 1945) was born in Keane, N.H., and grew up in Lincoln, NE. After high school, he taught school to raise money for college. A successful laboratory manual of high school botany he had co-authored led to his becoming the textbook agent in Nebraska for Ginn publishing. After six years with Ginn, he had saved enough for medical school. He graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine in 1910 at age 35.

After medical school, he joined the Lincoln practice of H. Winnett Orr. Also in the practice was C.W.M. Poynter who would be his rival for the deanship of the medical school. After two years in practice, he joined the medical school faculty as Director of Laboratories. Because of his administrative skills, he was named dean in 1915.

As dean, he persuaded the legislature to fund a much-needed University Hospital. This was followed by a nursing school building, a second laboratory building for biochemistry and physiology (now Bennett Hall), and a second unit for the hospital. He was a national leader in academic medicine and president of the Association of American Medical Colleges in its early years. He was also a noted bibliophile and medical historian.

In 1925, he left Nebraska for a successful career as dean of Northwestern University Medical School (1925 - 1941). He continued the themes he started at Nebraska: building the campus, enlarging the library, national academic leadership, and educating the public about medicine.



In their traditional white trousers and coats, the University of Nebraska Hospital interns of 1925 pose with both the outgoing dean, Dr. Cutter, and the incoming dean, Dr. Keegan, at the top of the hospital steps.



J. Jay Keegan, M.D.

Dean, 1925 - 1929

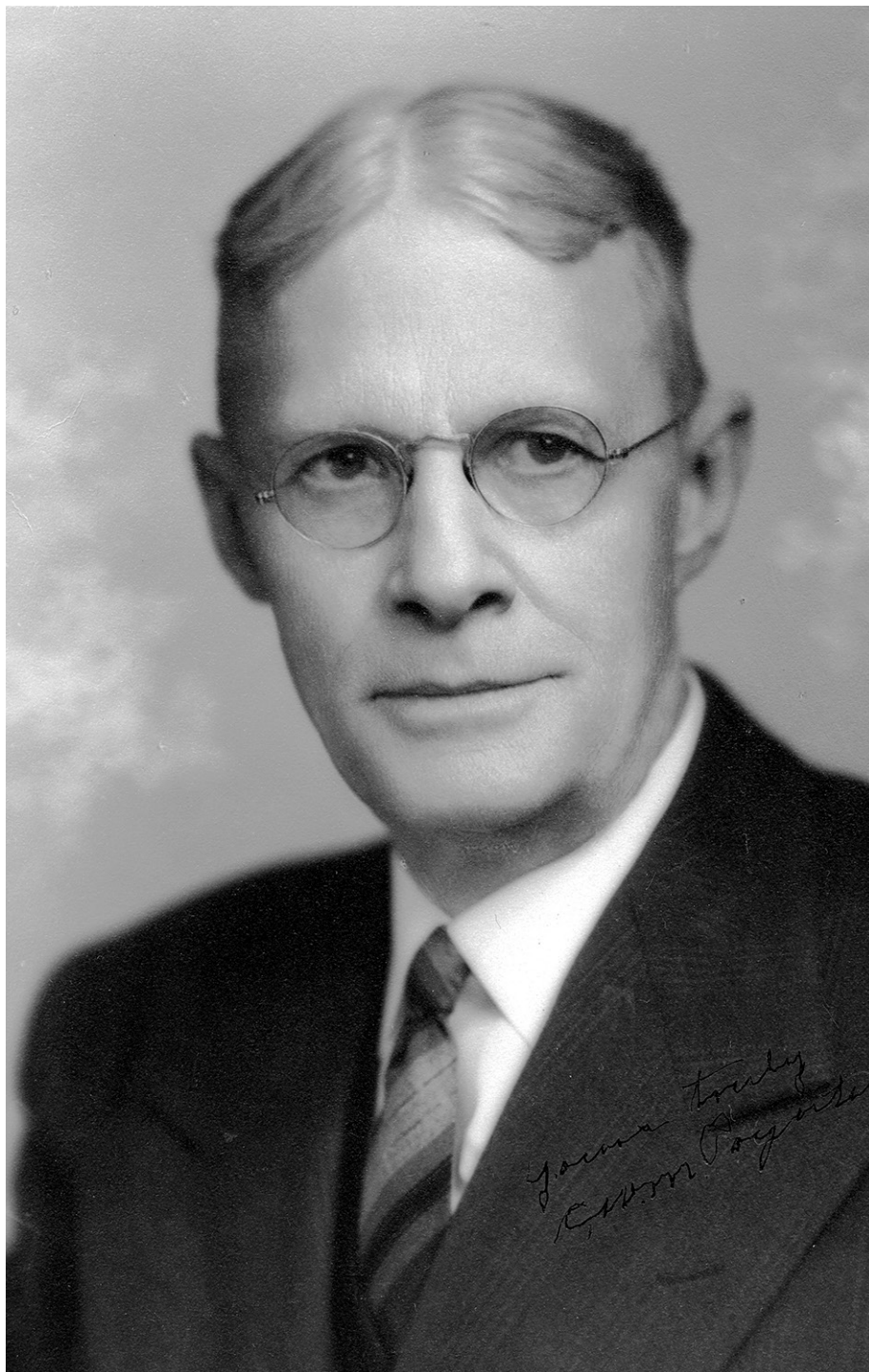
John Jay Keegan (1889 - 1978), an internationally known neurosurgeon, was born in Axtell, KS. He attended Kansas University, transferred after one year to the University of Nebraska, and graduated in 1911. He entered the University of Nebraska College of Medicine, receiving his master's degree in anatomy in 1914 and the M.D. degree in 1915. After graduation he interned in pathology at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, Boston, then remained for two years of surgical training under famed neurosurgeon, Harvey Cushing. During that time, he also served at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Chelsea, MA., where he wrote one of the first studies of the 1918 flu epidemic in the U.S. He returned to Omaha in 1920, where he began private practice and joined the faculty of the College of Medicine.

When Dr. Cutter resigned as dean in 1925, he picked Dr. Keegan as his successor. Keegan served four years as dean, from 1925 to 1929, then returned to teaching and private practice. He was chair of surgery for 15 years from 1933 to 1948.

Dr. Keegan had a distinguished career in academic medicine and was well known for his many contributions to the diagnosis of lumbar disc disease. He developed a widely used dermatome map and also studied the design of work chairs to optimize sitting posture and reduce fatigue and back pain.



University Hospital digs out from a heavy snow in 1945. Dr. Poynter is seen at the bottom of the hospital steps.



C.W.M. Poynter, M.D.

Acting Dean, 1929, Dean, 1930 - 1946

Charles William McCorkle Poynter (1875 - 1950) had the longest tenure of any dean (17 years) and was revered by students and faculty. Born in Eureka, IL. he came to Nebraska as a child. His father was later to serve as governor of Nebraska (1899-1901). He graduated from Albion High School in 1892, then taught school in Boone County before attending the University of Nebraska, where he received his B.S. in 1898 and his M.D. in 1902. He interned at Bellevue Clinic in New York City and at Cook County Hospital, Chicago, then came to Lincoln where he joined the practice of Dr. Winnett Orr in 1903. He left practice in 1906 to teach anatomy to medical students who were spending their first two years in Lincoln. He did postgraduate studies in Europe in 1907 and summer work at Harvard University in 1912 and 1914.

When all four years of the medical college moved to Omaha in 1913, Dr. Poynter was appointed professor and chairman of anatomy. He became acting dean of the college in 1929 and dean in 1930. He led the college through the depression years, the drought, and World War II. As dean, he was autocratic but fair. He ran the college almost single-handedly: He was the admissions committee and he assigned internships to graduating students. He was known for his wide-ranging interests in science, philosophy, and literature. At his retirement, a research foundation was established in his name by his former students.



The internal medicine ward team is about to present a patient in the University Hospital amphitheater.
The attending physician (in back in a dark suit) is Dr. Chester Q. Thompson.



Harold C. Lueth, M.D.

Dean, 1946 - 1952

Harold C. Lueth, M.D. (1904 - 1988), was born in Chicago. He attended Northwestern University where he received the B.S., M.D. and Ph.D. degrees. He joined the faculty in 1936 and rose to associate professor in 1946. In his 10 years at Northwestern, he pursued a scholarly career and published a number of articles about clinical medicine and medical education.

In 1931, Dr. Lueth had joined the Army Reserve and he reported for active duty as a major when World War II broke out in 1941. Dr. Lueth was chief of medical service at Fort Sheridan, IL., and, from 1942 to 1945, he was the surgeon general's liaison officer to the American Medical Association. He left service as a colonel in 1946.

Dr. Lueth succeeded Dr. Poynter as dean of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine in 1946. He received mixed reviews as dean: many felt that his management style was too autocratic. He also faced mounting financial problems because the support from the legislature was barely adequate for the college in the post-war years. He resigned in 1952 and entered private practice in Chicago.



Medical students on the steps of University Hospital in 1954.
Construction of Wittson Hall in 1968 removed the steps, but preserved the hospital building.



J. Perry Tollman M.D.

Dean, 1952 - 1964

James Perry Tollman (1904 - 1996) was born in Crawford, NE, the first dean of the College of Medicine to be born in Nebraska. He attended college at University of Nebraska then graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine in 1929. After internship at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, he returned to Omaha to join the faculty of the College of Medicine, becoming chair of the department of pathology and bacteriology in 1948 and dean of the College of Medicine in 1952.

As dean, he inherited a financial crisis: the state budget was inadequate and the American Medical Association had placed the college on probation. He successfully lobbied the legislature to increase funding. Over the next 12 years he recruited the first full-time clinical faculty members to become chairmen in internal medicine, obstetrics, surgery, and pediatrics; strengthened the college infrastructure; and oversaw many building projects including the Nebraska Psychiatric Institute, a new research laboratory, Unit III of the hospital, The Eppley Institute for Research in Cancer, Hattie B. Munroe Home, and the J.P Lord School. During his tenure, the Clarkson hospital moved to its present location at 42nd and Dewey Streets.

After stepping down as dean in 1964, he served as associate dean for the school of allied health and traveled widely in Asia to consult on the development of new medical schools.



Wittson Hall under construction: It was built over the entrance drive of the medical school and required removal of the steps of the old University Hospital.



Cecil L. Wittson, M.D.

Dean, 1964 – 1968

Cecil Legriel Wittson, (1907 - 1989) brought about a major expansion of the medical school campus and, in 1968, became the first chancellor of the medical center. Born in Camden, S.C., he graduated from the University of South Carolina Medical College in 1931. He interned at Roper Hospital in Charleston, S.C., then completed a residency in psychiatry at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. During World War II, he was a commander in the medical corps of the Navy Reserves stationed at the Bethesda Naval Hospital.

He came to Nebraska in 1950 to be director of the Nebraska Psychiatric Institute and later, chairman of the department of psychiatry. He pioneered programs in telemedicine, psychiatric research, and psychiatric training for family doctors. As dean, his skills in obtaining government funding and state appropriations allowed him to develop building projects and to expand research and clinical services. He also began programs to increase rural physicians in Nebraska. His building projects included the basic science building, later named Wittson Hall, a library of medicine, and a new, modern University Hospital.

Dr. Wittson was dean for four years. After the reorganization of the University of Nebraska into separate campuses, he became chancellor of the medical center. He retired from the university in 1972 and joined the architectural firm of Henningson Durham Richardson to help design medical facilities worldwide.



The modern University Hospital, completed in 1969, which replaced the old University Hospital built in 1917.
At left is the ambulatory clinic building which would be completed in 1977



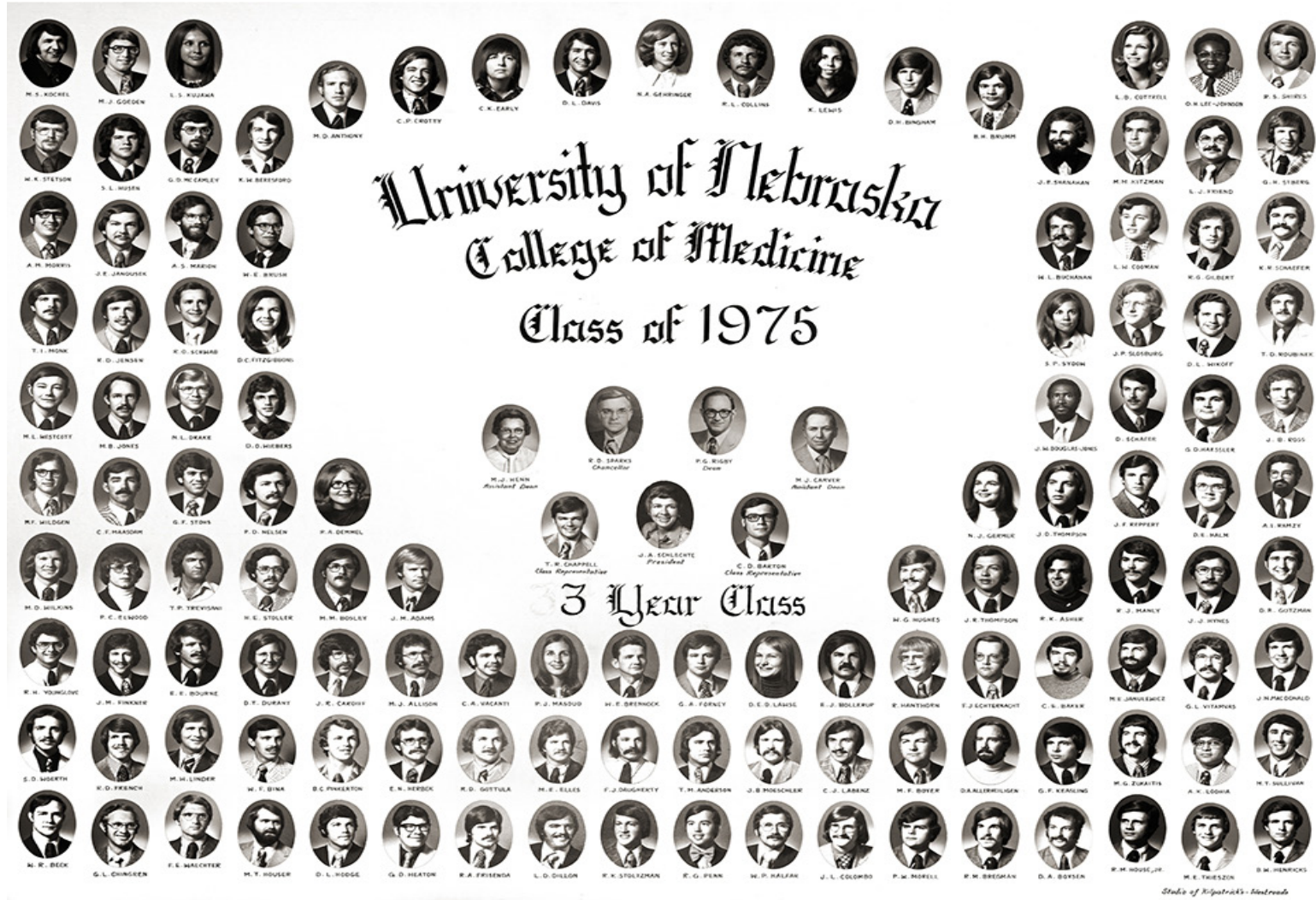
Robert Kugel, M.D.

Dean, 1969 – 1973

Robert B. Kugel (1923 -) took over as dean when Cecil Wittson accepted the newly created position of chancellor of the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Kugel had been chair of the department of pediatrics since 1966. A native of Chicago, he grew up in Washington, D.C. He attended Dartmouth College then transferred to the University of Michigan, where he remained for both an M.D. degree (1946) and a residency in pediatrics (1950). He completed a fellowship in pediatrics at Yale and, after military service, joined the faculty at Johns Hopkins. He became an expert in the care of mentally disabled children and served as a member of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation.

His tenure as dean was marked by his successful recruiting of new faculty to fill the offices and research opportunities newly created on campus. As dean, he presided over the creation of a new residency program in family practice and development of off-campus outpatient clinical facilities in Omaha. To increase the number of graduates in primary care, he began the change from a four-year to a three-year medical school curriculum and increased the class size.

Dr. Kugel left Nebraska in 1973 to be vice president for health sciences at the University of New Mexico and later moved to Kansas City as executive vice chancellor at the University of Kansas Medical Center.



The first full class to graduate under the three-year curriculum. Two classes graduated that year: the last of the four-year classes and the first three-year class. The three-year program lasted till 1979 when that year's entering class returned to the four-year curriculum.



Perry G. Rigby, M.D.

Dean, 1974 – 1978

Perry G Rigby (1932 -) was a popular educator and clinician who was instrumental in the change to a three year curriculum. Born in Ohio, he attended Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio, and received his M.D. degree from Case Western University. He was a resident in internal medicine at the University of Virginia and completed a fellowship in hematology at Boston University.

Dr. Rigby came to Nebraska in 1964 to head the division of hematology. He was a productive researcher with a strong interest in medical education. He won a Markle Fellowship in 1965 and was named assistant dean for curriculum and later associate dean for academic affairs. Congress, hoping to increase the supply of physicians, had passed legislation that rewarded medical schools that increased the size of their graduating class. Under this program, the College of Medicine introduced a three-year curriculum in 1972 and eventually raised the class size from 120 to 150. Another issue Dr. Rigby dealt with as dean was the highly charged debate between the clinical faculty and the university over the evolving design of the professional fee plan. The college adopted a new plan in 1978.

Dr. Rigby left Nebraska in 1978 for Louisiana State University in Shreveport where he served as dean. He later was Chancellor of the Louisiana State University Medical Center.



Among the centennial events was "Run for 101." Twenty sophomore students jogged roughly 80 miles per day starting at Henry, NE., on the Wyoming border and finishing at the medical center campus six days later. Other events included a Union Pacific College of Medicine Centennial Train and the publication of a history of the college.



Alastair Connell, M.D.

Dean, 1979 - 1984

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Alastair MacRae Connell (1929 -) was the second native of Scotland to become dean of the College of Medicine (the first was Donald Macrae, M.D. who was dean from 1889 to 1893). Dr. Connell received his B.S. and M.D. at Glasgow University. He completed internship at the Western Infirmary in Glasgow in 1955 and then trained as a clinical gastroenterologist and researcher at Central Middlesex and St. Mark's Hospitals in London from 1957 to 1960. He came to the U.S. in 1960 as director of the division of digestive diseases at the University of Cincinnati.

Dr. Connell became dean of the UNMC College of Medicine in 1979. He led the reintroduction of the four year curriculum then underway and presided over a gala College of Medicine centennial celebration in 1981. Working with Chancellor Neal Vanselow, he helped implement a new practice plan for the College of Medicine.

After five years as dean, he left Nebraska in 1984 to become vice president for the health sciences at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond.



The Durham Outpatient Center, completed in 1993 brought together outpatient services and clinics in one building. It serves as the front door to clinical services at UNMC.



Robert H. Waldman, M.D.

Dean, 1985 – 1991

Robert Hart Waldman (1938 - 1993) was an educational innovator who led a revolution in the Nebraska medical curriculum and created new programs to attract rural and minority students.

A native of Dallas, he attended Rice University and received his M.D. degree from Washington University Medical School in 1963. After residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital, he became a clinical associate at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. After that, he joined the internal medicine faculty at the University of Florida College of Medicine and, in 1976, moved to the West Virginia University School of Medicine where he became chairman of medicine and interim dean. He came to Nebraska in 1985 as dean of the College of Medicine.

As dean, he introduced problem-based learning and small group learning, reorganized the curriculum around core medical topics rather than by department, and introduced early clinical experiences. To increase rural physicians, he created programs that guaranteed admission to medical school for selected students in rural colleges in Nebraska. He also designed a new promotion and tenure system that better fit the needs of a modern medical faculty.

In 1992, he left Nebraska to become vice president for graduate medical education and international programs at the Association of American Medical Colleges, but served only briefly before his death from metastatic melanoma in 1993 at age 55.



The Hixson-Lied Center joined the University Medical Center campus and the former Clarkson Hospital and became the home of the merged surgical suites, neonatal intensive care, radiology, and emergency medicine services.



Harold M. Maurer M.D.

Dean, 1993 – 1998

During a 20-year career at Nebraska, first as dean and then as chancellor, Harold M. Maurer (1936 –) began a major building program and expansion of research, service and educational programs. Dr. Maurer was born in New York City. He received his M.D. from SUNY Downstate Medical Center in 1961 and completed internship at Kings County Hospital (1962). He was a resident in pediatrics at Babies Hospital, Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, New York City (1964) and continued there as a fellow in pediatric hematology and oncology (1966-68). He joined the faculty of the Medical College of Virginia in 1968 and became chairman in 1976. He became an internationally known expert in rhabdomyosarcoma, a deadly cancer of children, and has published over 200 scientific papers.

In his five years as dean at Nebraska, he raised the academic standards, increased the size of the M.D./Ph.D. program, developed a uniform faculty practice plan for the college and became a community leader in Omaha. He led the negotiations to merge the University Hospital and the private Clarkson Hospital to form the Nebraska Health System. In 1997, he began a 15-year tenure as chancellor that saw major expansion of the medical center campus and improvement in education, research, and clinical service. In 2015, he returned to the clinical practice of pediatric hematology and oncology at UNMC.



The Lied Transplant Center was completed in 1998 to provide clinical services and research facilities for oncology and transplantation.



James O. Armitage, M.D.

Dean, 2000 - 2003

James O. Armitage M.D. (1946 -), an internationally recognized clinician and expert in oncology, was born in Los Angeles. His family moved to Kearney, NE. when he was very young. He graduated in 1969 from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, then earned his M.D. degree in 1973 at the Nebraska College of Medicine and completed an internal medicine residency there in 1975. On completion of a fellowship in hematology and oncology at the University of Iowa, he was in private practice for two years, then joined the Iowa faculty and started their bone marrow transplantation program.

In 1982, he returned to University of Nebraska as chief of the section of oncology and hematology. At Nebraska, he established a highly successful bone marrow transplantation program and a major program in lymphoma research. Dr. Armitage became an internationally respected clinician and researcher in oncology, particularly in non-Hodgkin lymphoma, with over 500 scientific articles and book chapters.

In 1990, he was named chair of internal medicine and in 2000, became dean of the medical college. During his nearly four year tenure as dean, he recruited seven department chairs, initiated the emergency medicine residency, and established a new department of neurological sciences. He was instrumental in developing the Lied Transplant Center. After his tenure as dean, he returned to clinical patient care and research.



The Michael Sorrell Educational Center shortly after its opening in 2008. The Sorrell Center has many rooms for student interaction and teaching as well as advanced technological teaching tools. It became the new home for the College of Medicine.



John L. Gollan MD, PhD

Dean, 2003 - 2010

John L. Gollan (1942 - 2015), a native of Tasmania, received his M.D. from Adelaide University, Australia and his Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of London. After clinical training in liver disease at the Royal Free Hospital, London, he joined the faculty at the University of California, San Francisco. In 1981, he was recruited by Harvard Medical School, where he established a program in liver diseases and became director of the division of gastroenterology. He returned to Adelaide to head the department of medicine in 1999. In 2001, Nebraska recruited him to become chairman of the department of internal medicine. He became dean of the College of Medicine two years later. Dr. Gollan was an internationally known expert in research and clinical treatment of liver disease and during his career received many awards and honors.

In his seven years as dean, his achievements included presiding over the college's move to the Sorrell Center, recruiting 11 department chairs; establishing good working relationships with the newly merged Nebraska Medical Center; and, for four and a half years, patiently negotiating a critical affiliation agreement with Children's Hospital that improved resident and student education and relationships with faculty in pediatrics.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to John Schleicher for providing original documents and historical data about the college, to Stuart Dayton for the design and layout of this book, to Reba Benschoter, Sandy Benson, and Rose Reynolds for archiving and preserving the historical photos of the Omaha Medical College and the University of Nebraska College of Medicine so that they would pass on to us, and to the Deans Office, College of Medicine, the Michael F. Sorrell Center Building Fund and the McGoogan Library Wigton History Fund, for financial support of this project.



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