May 2005


Robert Vander Hart
University of Massachusetts Medical School, robert.vanderhart@umassmed.edu

Judy Nordberg
University of Massachusetts Medical School, judy.nordberg@umassmed.edu

Gael Evans
University of Massachusetts Medical School (retired)

Follow this and additional works at: http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/lib_postpres

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Repository Citation
http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/lib_postpres/20

This material is brought to you by eScholarship@UMMS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Posters and Presentations by an authorized administrator of eScholarship@UMMS. For more information, please contact Lisa.Palmer@umassmed.edu.

The Lamar Soutter Library, University of Massachusetts Medical School

1930-1935
Voyages Lay Foundation For Medical Career

As a student at Harvard College, Lamar Soutter developed an interest in science and history. In the early 1930s he and a friend took a 13,000-mile canoe trip in the wilds of the Yukon, much of it through uncharted territory. Lamar’s friend succumbed to the rigors of the journey and both young men barely made it out of the wilderness alive. In July 1933 Lamar signed on to be a crew member on the maiden voyage of the Atlantis, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution’s first research vessel. Beginning in Copenhagen, Denmark, the ship soon encountered rough weather and experienced several mechanical problems. The crew was immobilized from seasickness; there was no doctor on board to deal with injuries and several serious accidents that occurred. It was this experience that made Soutter, then a young college graduate, decide to continue on to medical school, even though he was still not 100% committed to that course of action at the time.

1933
Noted Surgeon Dies At 63
Son Lamar Perseveres at Harvard Medical

Boston—Dr. Robert Soutter, noted orthopedic surgeon, died on February 21 of blood poisoning. He had contracted the infection from a small scratch, which he sustained while performing surgery on a polio patient. Despite the artificially death of his father, Lamar Soutter continued on with his studies at Harvard Medical School, graduating in 1939.

1937
Soutter Treats Hindenburg Victims

New York—Soutter’s medical residency was spent in the Surgical Department at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, in the late 1930s. The routine life of residency was shattered when, in May 1937, the zeppelin Hindenburg exploded at Lakehurst, New Jersey. Soutter assisted in many surgeries on victims of the tragedy.

1942
Blood Bank At Mass General Stored Plasma Saves Nightclub Fire Victims

Boston—Dr. Soutter was instrumental in establishing the blood bank at Massachusetts General Hospital and was its first Director. To feed the blood bank, Soutter solicited money from outside sources to pay for the refrigerators and other equipment. He also actively sought out donors. Soutter and his staff pioneered new techniques for blood filtration and purification. When the Cocoanut Grove nightclub fire occurred in November, stored plasma from the blood bank saved many lives.

1944
Soutter Glides Into Action

Field Surgery Saves Lives of Many Wounded

Bari, France—When World War II erupted, Dr. Soutter enlisted and joined the Army’s Fourth Auxiliary Surgical Unit. He later volunteered to aid the wounded at the Battle of the Bulge in Bari, Belgium in December 1944. In order to reach the surrounded Allied forces, Soutter and his medical team had to be ferried by a C-47 cargo plane in an unheated glider loaded with medical supplies. Once on the ground, the evacuees had to walk for a half in the fighting to leave the glider, and then they had to run for the medical tent where the wounded awaited treatment. Dr. Soutter and the other medical personnel performed 63 operations in the next 24 hours. For their valiant efforts, Dr. Soutter and each member of his team were awarded the Silver Star, the second highest military medal possible, for “exceptional gallantry in action.”

1963-1975
Ground Broken For Worcester Med School

Major Triumph Over Adversity for Dr. Lamar Soutter

Worcester—Lamar Soutter’s innovative ideas in the training of new physicians were the catalyst for him being named Dean of the first state medical school in Massachusetts in 1963. Dr. Soutter took on the monumental task of planning and creating the new school. Many obstacles had to be overcome; the Massachusetts gubernatorial position changed hands four times, federal funds given during the Johnson administration were rescinded during the Nixon administration, building costs soared from $31 million to $125 million, faculty had to be hired and students selected. In 1969, Acting Governor Francis Sargent witnessed the completion of the center. Finally, in 1976, the University of Massachusetts Medical School opened its doors in Worcester, Massachusetts. In 1973 the new school building opened at its permanent location at 33 Lake Avenue, and in 1976 its adjacent facility, the University of Massachusetts Hospital, began to admit its first patients.