

Homer G. Phillips and the Legacy of Public Hospitals in St. Louis

In 1905 Dr. John Green, President of the St. Louis Medical Society, with a keen understanding of the plight of public hospitals in other cities issued this charge to St. Louis physicians on the eve of opening a new City Hospital:

“Will it vouchsafe to the pauper a medical care equivalent to that which his pecuniarily more fortunate fellow citizens receive? Will it fulfill to the utmost its function of providing instruction in practical medicine to the undergraduate student? And will our hospital be thoroughly in accord with the spirit of medical enlightenment?”

*Presidential Report, St. Louis Medical Review
January 14, 1905*

A succession of public hospitals failed in that charge -- City Hospital No. 1 (Max C. Starkloff), City Hospital No. 2, and St. Louis County Hospital, despite their professed missions, opened as segregated facilities. Only under duress, and toward the twilight of their existence, did they admit and treat irrespective of race, creed or color. There is one bright exception, the Homer G. Phillips Hospital. It opened its doors as a truly “public” facility in 1937, still shrouded in intrigue after the mysterious assassination of its main advocate and benefactor, attorney Homer Gilliam Phillips. At a time in American society when people of color were restricted from most medical training programs, the Homer G. Phillips Hospital became the premier training ground for African American medical professionals – many of whom remained to deliver high quality health care in the St. Louis area and who later assumed prestigious positions throughout the nation. The successes of its subsequent years of operation (as well as the complex issues surrounding its closure) became legendary in the annals of public hospitals. It closed its doors on August 17, 1979, followed by St. Louis City No. 1 in 1985, St. Louis County Hospital in 1987, and St. Louis Regional Hospital in 1997. While we cannot now walk the halls of Homer G. Phillips Hospital, we can learn much from its history, presented by the very people who strived diligently to provide culturally sensitive care to the patients who so deeply trusted and loved them and their hospital. This lecture series is named in honor of the historic Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis.

The Homer G. Phillips Public Health Lecture Series

“A Legacy of Excellence: The Washington University and Homer G. Phillips Story”



Guest Speaker:

Ira Kodner, MD

*Solon and Bettie Gershman Emeritus Professor of Surgery,
Washington University School of Medicine
Director, Center for the Study of Ethics and Human Values*

**Honoring
Homer G. Phillips Senior Living Community**

Friday, October 24, 2014

Washington University School of Medicine
Eric P. Newman Education Center (EPNEC)
320 South Euclid Avenue
Saint Louis, Missouri 63110

6:00 p.m.
Cocktails
Atrium

6:30 p.m.
Dinner
Great Rooms

7:30 p.m.
Lecture
Auditorium

Program

Welcome**Will Ross, M.D., M.P.H.**
Associate Dean for Diversity
Office of Diversity Programs

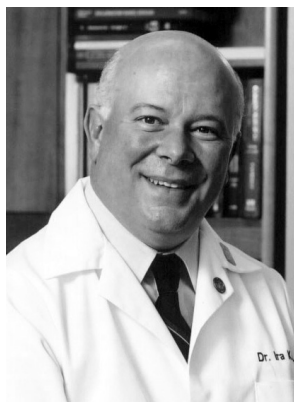
**Introduction of
Ira Kodner, M.D.****Larry Shapiro M.D.**
Executive Vice Chancellor
and Dean for Medical Affairs

**“A Legacy of Excellence:
The Washington University
and Homer G. Phillips Story”****Ira Kodner, M.D.**
Solon and Bettie Gershman
Emeritus Professor of Surgery,
Washington University
School of Medicine
Director, Center for the Study
of Ethics and Human Values

Presentation.....**Will Ross, M.D., M.P.H.**
Associate Dean for Diversity
Office of Diversity Programs

Questions.....**Audience**

Ira Kodner, M.D.



Dr. Kodner has over forty years of medical experience, having served as Professor of Surgery and Chief of the Section of Colon and Rectal Surgery. Dr. Kodner served as director of the Center for Colorectal and Pelvic Floor Disorders at Washington University's medical school and specialized in inflammatory bowel disease.

When Kodner started teaching at the medical school about 20 years ago, he offered an elective class in ethics. The class was called "Dealing with Sick Folk and Their Families," and covered such topics as delivering bad news, diversity and telling the truth in medicine. Kodner came up with the idea of starting the Center for the Study of Ethics and Human Values in 2000 when he was asked to help the American College of Surgeons develop a curriculum to teach ethics to

surgical students. He got moral support from Washington University leadership to launch the center in 2003. Dr. Kodner also led a collaborative, interdisciplinary effort to launch a Palliative Care Program at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University. To increase awareness of palliative care, the Center brought together faculty and student from across Washington University, along with multiple partners throughout the St. Louis area, to assist Barnes-Jewish Hospital in establishing a palliative care program.

Dr. Kodner belongs to numerous professional and academic societies and hospital committees, and has received 21 research grants and awards. With extensive lecturing experience, he has spoken at medical centers and association conferences throughout the country on a range of topics including the treatment of rectal cancer and inflammatory bowel disease, the role of surgery in complicated cancer and clinical relevance of genetic advances. In addition, he has authored or co-authored over 150 peer-reviewed manuscripts and book chapters and abstracts.

Dr. Kodner is a past president of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons. He has served on many medical committees and boards, including the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery, the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, the National Foundation for Ileitis and Colitis, and the American College of Surgeons. He has also served on the American Board of Surgery, the American Cancer Society, and the United Ostomy Association. In 2005 he was named Health Care Heroes by St. Louis Business Journal. An excellent communicator, he spent four years doing weekly medical stories for KMOV/Channel 4.

Born in Kentucky and brought up in St. Louis, Dr. Kodner earned his bachelor's degree and medical degrees at Washington University. After his residency in surgery and three years serving in the Army, he trained in colon and rectal surgery at the Cleveland Clinic. Kodner returned to St. Louis in 1975 to join a private practice and to join the faculty at the Washington University School of Medicine, where he helped build the renowned colon and rectal surgery program.

He has been married since 1967 to Barbara, an Olivette historian and author; they have three children and two grandchildren. One of his favorite pastimes is attending to his orchid collection.

Homer G. Phillips Senior Living Community

After the Homer G. Phillips Hospital closed in 1979, many thought that this urban neighborhood was too far gone to risk capital on new development. Recognizing the historic importance of the structure, the former hospital was designated a City Landmark in 1980 by the St. Louis Board of Alderman, and in 1982 the Department of the Interior added it to the National Register of Historic Places. The property remained abandoned until 1991, when the city reopened the adjacent clinic, and the nurses' building behind the main hospital also was reopened as an addition to Annie Malone Children's Home. However, the main building remained vacant. In 1998, developer Sharon Thomas Robnett renewed negotiations to turn the building into a low-income nursing home and apartments for the elderly, and successfully signed a 99-year lease on the property. In December 2001, renovations began on the main building through Robnett's development company, W.A.T. Dignity Corp., continuing through July 2003. The renovation project, led by architects of the Fleming Corporation, cost more than \$43 million and produced a 220-unit supervised facility for the elderly. In addition to including apartments for the elderly, the facility provides adult daycare, respite care, pharmacy, mental health and substance abuse treatment programs. Managed by Dominium, the success of the Homer G. Phillips Senior Living Community was in the many alliances the development team made to provide services to its residents. It now offers a set of apartments in a variety of sizes from studios to large two bedrooms, where seniors live independently, but may receive additional services like transportation, pools, a convenience store, bank, barber/beauty shop, resident laundry, housekeeping, and security. As a result of the development efforts, the property achieved 100% occupancy less than 6 months from construction completion. The Homer G. Phillips Senior Living Community has also received a number of awards, including the Preservation Honor Award from the Missouri Governor's office. Thirty-five years after the closing of Homer G. Phillips Hospital, the legacy of grandeur, caring, and service remains in the Ville neighborhood.