

"Carroll County Hospital Dedication, 1961"
Carroll County Times article for 27 August 2000
By Jay A. Graybeal

Carroll County General Hospital was dedicated 39 years ago today, the culmination of many years of planning and fund raising. The idea of a county hospital, however, was raised many years earlier. Shortly after World War I ended in 1918, some local residents suggested the creation of a local hospital as a suitable memorial to the veterans. The idea was revisited following World War II but the time was not yet right.

The September 14th issue of the Democratic Advocate newspaper printed the dedication speeches of Dr. Charles L. Billingslea and Scott S. Bair:

"Bair & Billingslea Addresses Made at Hospital Dedication – Many of our local people were deeply impressed by speeches given by Dr. Charles L. Billingslea and Mr. Scott S. Bair, at the dedication of the Carroll County General Hospital on Sunday, August 27th. We were able to secure copies and are publishing them. After reading them, we again feel the humility shown by these two men and are proud that they are natives of our community. Their speeches were as follows:

Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, and all of you who have honored this ceremony with your presence. This hospital dedication ceremony should be long remembered—for it marks the day in Carroll County, when Humanitarianism keeps its rendezvous with destiny. Speaking in behalf of the healing professions, may we thank you for your generosity and congratulate you for your wisdom and vision in bringing your hospital to reality.

Remain steadfast in support of this hospital in the future. Always keeping in mind the kind of work that this little institution of mercy will perform in the care of the sick and the relief of suffering—for surely that kind of work falls within the shadow of the Cross.

We would be remiss if we did not use this occasion to publicly acknowledge the great debt of gratitude that is owed by the citizens of this area to our good neighbor hospitals. Specifically, the thanks are due to the hospitals at Hanover, Gettysburg, Frederick, and to all of those other superb hospitals located in Baltimore.

May we mention the ideals toward which the personnel of this hospital will strive to reach in the care of the sick entrusted to our keeping. These ideals are so well expressed in an inscription on a monument in France that I wish to quote: 'May We Cure, sometimes; May We Relieve, often; But May We Comfort Always!' – Dr. Charles L. Billingslea.

The planning of this facility that we today dedicate goes back almost two decades to the early years of World War II, when in the Westminster Rotary Club was initiated the building of a suitable memorial of those then in the service of our nation, as well as those who served in World War I. This became an inter-service club project under the able leadership of the late Claud T. Kimmey, finally resulting in the building of this fine adjoining Medical Center.

There were those who then thought the memorial should have been a hospital. But we sought the best possible advice and were told the time was not yet ready. However, it was then the decision was made

and plans were laid for the building of a hospital adjoining the Memorial Medical Center. And when we asked for funds, you of Carroll County and our good neighbors of Reisterstown and Glyndon gave, and sacrificed, and continued to give, almost two and one-half fold when we had asked.

I am proud to be given the privilege to participate in these ceremonies, and to say on behalf of everyone of you, who helped to raise this hospice by your generous gifts of money, time and talents, our dream has come true and we can be justly proud of your efforts.

And now, in closing, there is just one thought I would leave with you today – a thought left with us during the planning stages by Dr. Warfield Firor when he visited here with Dr. Theodore Woodward – and the thought was that we could rush through and have just another small hospital or we could plan it and staff it with careful and mature consideration and have a renowned place of healing. Yes, we can establish here today just another hospital where people dread to come when they are ill, or, as Dr. Firor so wisely stated, we can establish here a renowned place of healing.

We have the best that can be had in a physical facility. The rest is up to the personnel who man this hospital. And to that end, we shall have no place here for those just looking for another day's pay for another eight hours, but rather those who are willing to give just a little of themselves, those who are willing to give a little kindness, a little love, a little tenderness, a bit of cheer to those requiring the hospital's services. But this cannot be done by just the nurses or aides, it must be permeated throughout the entire organization from the top on down.

And, my friends, if this thought is carried through, with the life-giving view of these beautiful rolling green hills, and fertile valley with the glorious Blue Ridge in the background, this will, under God's guidance, become a renowned place of healing where the souls as well as the bodies will be mended; and the sick and the ailing will come from far and near, as well as the funds so necessary for its support and growth.

Yes, my friends, we are today dedicating an efficient well-appointed, beautiful building, but tomorrow when this hospital comes to life with devoted men and women giving just a little of themselves in tender care, kindness and love to those whose needs bring them here, then and only then will our vision be fulfilled, and then and only then will that for which you gave and sacrificed and worked be fully realized.—Scott S. Bair."

When the writer became an emergency room patient in 1966, the hospital lived up the vision that the institution would be much more than another hospital where people dread to come when they are ill or injured.

Photo caption: Carroll County General Hospital was dedicated on August 27, 1961. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.