

Dr. William L. Winters Jr., M.D., founding editor of the *Methodist DeBakey Cardiovascular Journal*, is an accomplished cardiologist, writer, and poet. Since joining the Houston Methodist faculty in 1968, Winters has had a front-row seat (and often leading role) in the remarkable transformation of Houston Methodist's heart center from rising star to an epicenter of cardiovascular medicine and innovation. Inspired by his years working with cardiovascular legends like Michael DeBakey to the latest generation of medical masterminds, Winters assumed the role of heart center historian. In 2014, he published *Houston Hearts: A History of Cardiovascular Surgery and Medicine and the Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center at Houston Methodist Hospital*. This unique insider's account was meticulously researched; Winters conducted hundreds of hours of interviews, which were published in 2016's *Reflections – Houston Methodist Hospital*. Most recently, Winters penned this poem recounting the heart center's history in limerick form, which I am pleased to share with you today.

—Miguel A. Quiñones, M.D., M.A.C.C., F.A.S.E., Editor-in-Chief

THE METHODIST DEBAKEY HEART & VASCULAR CENTER A POETIC HISTORY (ABRIDGED)

The Houston Methodist Hospital System stands proud and tall.
Its motto, "Leading Medicine," proclaims it all.
Starting with "I Care"
We've all become aware
Of the values our culture proclaims to all.

Houston Methodist DeBakey Heart Center is but one part
Of our "centers of excellence" that impart
A sense of the best
Separating us from the rest
By providing only state of the art.

This history goes back a long way.
That started a remarkable journey, I'd say.
Lay it all on one man
Who opined that "I can"
Establish a landmark one day.

Dr. O.R. Norsworthy started it all
By building a brand new hospital.
It was in 19-0-8,
I'm quite sure of the date
As it's recorded in Houston's town hall.

For years it served the city quite well.
But with a constantly growing clientele,
It outgrew its space
Over the years at a pace
That ultimately forced the decision to sell.

That Methodist crowd was a clever lot.
In 1919 they snapped up the Norsworthy plot.
Made Methodist Hospital its name
Ensuring its forthcoming fame
As the best brand of all, believe it or not.

A few wise heads then foresaw a new need.
And decided they should take the lead
To find a new spot
One they'd like a lot
That would nourish great things from that seed.

It took many years and plenty of luck
With Ella Fondren and Josie Roberts' pluck
To secure the site
Fund it just right
Assuring it remained star struck.

So a new Hospital came to be
As part of the Texas Medical Center, you see.
It was in 1951,
A year second to none,
For setting the stage for things yet to be.

Other players were also getting it right.
Baylor brought DeBakey into its sight.
But it soon came to pass
That Dr. DeBakey, alas,
Had no private Hospital for his patients to light.

So DeBakey and Methodist joined in a pack
That resonated historically, in fact.
Like two peas in a pod,
More potent than A. Rod
In giving cardiovascular medicine a huge impact.

DeBakey began assembling his band.
Hiring Cooley and Crawford on one hand,
Training Morris and Howell
Not to grumble and growl
While teaching Garrett, Noon, and others his brand.

At the same time, cardiology made a play
For Don W. Chapman was having his say.
A cardiac cath was first done
In 1948, at hospital Hermann
In an old x-ray lab before the break of day.

The "Chapman Group" gradually took form
Peterson and Beazley joined to perform.
It didn't take long
To add to the throng
Winters, Spencer, and Cashion to the dorm.

Baylor Cardiology was making its play
With Dennis and O'Donnell leading the way.
The cath lab came of age
As angiograms were the rage.
Patients came by the hundreds in relays.

Another arrival in '48
Seemingly a very important date,
Ted Bowen was his name,
Destined for future fame
As successor to Josie Roberts, the great.

Cardiovascular medicine in those early years
Was focused on surgical frontiers,
To fixed faulty parts
In blood vessels and hearts,
By innovative surgical pioneers.

DeBakey, Cooley, and Crawford led the way
Developing techniques still used today
With Dacron and new tools
Proving them no fools
In putting clever solutions into play.

The intravascular catheter soon opened doors
For cardiologists and surgeons by the scores
To see inside the heart
Making decisions really smart
As they repaired and replaced defects galore.

Many firsts began to appear
From this rarified atmosphere:
Like a Dacron graft
To serve as a shaft
To repair an artery gone queer.

Or the idea Garrett and Howell had
To bypass a blocked artery, Egad!
From the leg, a vein,
Not really insane,
A better match than Guinevere and Sir Galahad.

When cardiac ultrasound appeared on the scene
It enabled doctors now to screen
For function and size
Then how better to advise
Those making hard decisions more routine.

Inge Edler and Helmuth Hertz were the key.
How the mitral valve worked, they wanted to see.
So they put sonar to work
To see what pearls might lurk
Inside the heart that could be set free.

Claude Joyner, at Penn, opened the door
For Winters' curiosity to learn more,
About ultrasound, per se
Whose very pearls to this day
Appear in images for us to savor.

So, when Winters moved to Houston town
Ultrasound accompanied him down.
In Methodist it became
A procedure to lay claim
To add to the hospital's renown.

Echocardiography as it is now known
Became strategic as it has grown.
Parlayed by our three
Quiñones, Zoghbi, Nagueh they be
As experts worldwide, they really shone.

To prevent and treat heart attacks rose to the fore
As they were occurring as never before,
In the young and the old
In numbers untold
Frustrating physicians to the core.

Many quickly joined the fray,
Like Gotto and Raizner in their own way.
Lipids by Gotto
With Raizner's new motto
Open closed arteries without delay.

The lipid concept, not entirely new.
But by other's work, and his, Gotto knew
Lowering cholesterol and LDL
Would work very well
At reducing heart attacks, a real breakthrough.

In the meantime, Winters and Raizner gave thought
To what Grundzig in 1978 had taught.
A catheter well placed,
Would a blockage erase
And restore circulation, miracle wrought.

So, he, Winters and Lewis,
Emboldened as opportunists
To Zurich they went.
There, was Grundzig's tent,
To learn how to become catheter balloonists.

So was born "Interventional Cardiology"
A whole new dynamic philosophy.
Identify what's wrong
Don't tarry too long
Then let the catheter fix it wondrously.

In 1970, an important event took place
Where Cardiology as a department, we can trace.
Henry McIntosh was the man
Who started it, a grand plan,
To train young doctors, he made the case.

So the training program he started
Came into full bloom, after he departed.
Becoming known, near and far,
For fine training on a par
With the best in programs uncharted.

In 1997 McIntosh left the scene.
His replacement was soon to be seen.
Antonio Gotto, the man,
Stepped in with a plan
That brought Bob Roberts in hand with a gene.

Roberts saw in cardiology a tether
That brought clinicians and researchers together
In a way that bode well
For patients and trainees to tell
The department is really a treasure.

But a pothole appeared one ignominious day
Incredulous to many they still say
When Methodist and Baylor
Were not able to tailor
An agreement to keep them in play.

Their paths then began to diverge
As Methodist's plan began to emerge
Stay on the academic path
Find a partner who hath
The will and the foresight to converge.

In New York, Weill Cornell passed the test
Being more receptive than the rest
Agreed to the plan
And a new alliance began
To keep Houston Methodist among the best.

The year was 2005 A.D.
With new goals for the hospital, indeed,
A new outpatient center
Plus a research building to enter
An age of progress seemed guaranteed.

So, now, the next hurdles to overcome
Were training programs to be second to none
So Judy Paukert, it was,
From San Antonio because
She was really good at what had to be done.

Over the next 10 years she succeeded
To set up 30 programs that proceeded
To pass all the tests
Required in the quest
For approval by ACGME, as needed.

Two new departments were created from scratch
Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery, the hatch.
Quiñones and Lumsden,
A pair rare like tungsten.
As new chairmen were an outstanding match.

Training programs were resurrected anew,
Continuing old programs with some things new.
In doing this, Dr. Pratt,
A cagey sly old cat
Proved again to be a pro through and through.

ACGME was so completely impressed
With the program, they quickly confessed
You're looking really smart
Ready and willing to start
So with nary a visit, it was blessed.

The MDH Center, in 2001, so named
Was now off to a new start untamed.
With a new sense of purpose,
Rededication to service
Through the motto, ICARE, all acclaimed.

It's time now to reflect on the past
At hospital leadership unsurpassed.
Mathis and Butler followed Bowen
Then Giroto kept good times flowin'
To Marc Boom, now 5 years before the mast.

In the 10 years since the historic split
All manner of good things have come, to wit:
Awards, internal and external,
Houston Hearts and this *Heart* journal,
And a cool staff with a "can do" spirit.

In 2016 a change in the guard.
A new high profile now in charge.
William Zoghbi's the name
Now in charge of the game
Brings to cardiology a new wildcard.

The cardiovascular deck is now fully loaded.
Nothing there looks out moded
The Research Institute is there
With John Cooke the chair
So cardiovascular science will roll as Perot did.

And as I look out my window, I see
The skeleton of what soon will be,
A new hospital to sit,
On the north campus where it
Will be MDHV Center's new home, Yipee!!

I'm so excited for the future I could shout.
So I will, as the old guy on the way out.
Look forward not back
To the front of the pack
And remember, attitude is the key, no doubt.

—William L. Winters Jr., M.D., M.A.C.C.