

AFFILIATION HAS PROVED FRUITFUL AND HISTORIC

New collaboration provides opportunity to expand clinical care, research, education and international outreach

A little over a year has passed since The Methodist Hospital announced its 30-year primary affiliation with Weill Medical College of Cornell University and New York-Presbyterian Hospital. In the companion article in this edition of the *Journal of the Methodist DeBakey Heart Center*, Drs. Sostman, Hajjar and Gotto describe the overall affiliation and many of the resulting collaborative efforts and future possibilities for all three institutions in this area.

Methodist, Weill Cornell and New York-Presbyterian all possess long and storied histories in cardiac and vascular care. The Methodist Hospital has been a worldwide pioneer in the management of cardiac and vascular disorders. Many "firsts" were achieved at Methodist, including the first successful removal of plaque from the carotid artery, the invention of the Dacron graft, the first aortic coronary artery bypass, the first heart-lung transplant, and the first implantation of the MicroMed DeBakey VAD™.

In 1999, the Methodist Heart Center Council was formed with the vision of becoming the benchmark heart center of the world. This council was renamed in 2002 as the Methodist DeBakey Heart Center to honor one of the preeminent physicians of our time - Dr. Michael E. DeBakey. Today, the center has more than 500 employees and 75 physicians, and receives more than \$15 million annually in research support from the National Institutes of Health, the American Heart Association and other sources. Recent accomplishments include the first blood test designed to help predict a patient's risk for ischemic stroke, and development of a minimally

invasive bypass technique that allows scintigraphy of aneurysms in the ascending aorta, descending aorta and aortic arch.

EXCELLENCE IN CLINICAL CARE

New York-Presbyterian also has a longstanding history of excellence in cardiac and vascular education, research and clinical care. As one of only 30 hospitals in the nation designated as an accredited Chest Pain Center, it treats more than 8,000 chest pain patients annually. Collectively, Methodist DeBakey Heart Center and New York-Presbyterian Hospital represent a large volume of cardiac and vascular services - accounting for 12,414 diagnostic cardiac catheterizations, 4,134 percutaneous cardiac interventions, 2,612 cardiac bypass procedures and 686 valvular procedures in 2004 alone.

Recognizing both the historic importance of cardiac and vascular services, and the integral role they play in the future of Methodist, the medical staff and administrative leadership at Methodist designated cardiology and cardiac surgery as two new departments in 2005.

These areas traditionally had been sections within the respective departments of medicine and surgery, yet lacked permanent leadership after the dissolution of Methodist's relationship with its previous primary medical school partner. Thus, one of the earliest outcomes of the new affiliation has been the successful recruitment of chairs of the Department of Cardiology and the Department of Cardiac Surgery.

Faculty from Weill Cornell and Methodist participated in both search committees, often

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meeting via videoconference. Candidates were interviewed in both Houston and New York. In August 2005, Dr. Miguel Quinones was named chair of the Department of Cardiology, and the naming of the chair of the Department of Cardiac Surgery is eminent.

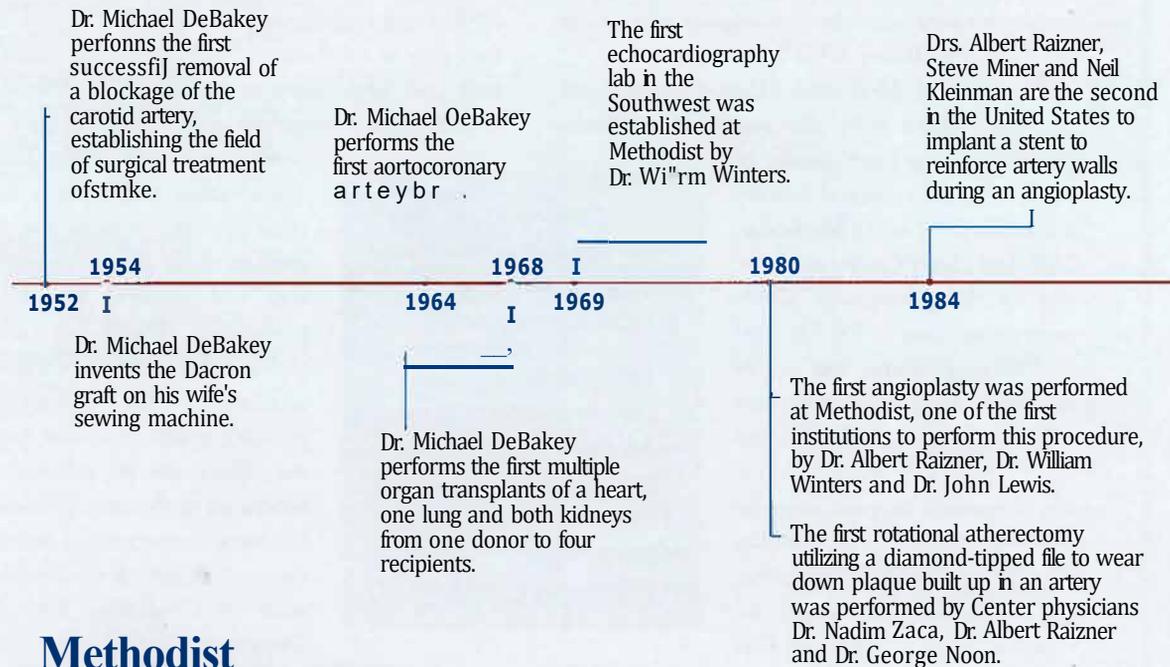
With the installation of two new department chairs and the prodigious volume of cardiac and vascular care provided at the institutions, it is anticipated that great progress will be made in advancing the quality of clinical care provided at both hospitals. New York-Presbyterian Hospital is ranked seventh and Methodist DeBakey Heart Center 16th in the 2005 survey by *U.S. News & World Report*. Such surveys continue to be driven primarily by reputation scores. Certainly, both hospitals enjoy strong reputations independently and anticipate further strengthening as a result of the affiliation. In the future, it is likely that both hospital and program rankings will be driven more by outcome data rather than reputation.

Because their cardiac programs essentially do not compete for the same patient referral base, the two hospitals are able to share clinical, financial and operational results to a much greater extent than other institutions. Initial report cards have already been developed and will be utilized to improve these results at both institutions.

EDUCATION

The Methodist Hospital's graduate medical education programs have undergone substantial change since the dissolution of the relationship with its previous primary academic partner, which historically sponsored residency programs at Methodist. Although trainees in cardiovascular disease, vascular surgery and thoracic surgery from Methodist's former partner still rotate at Methodist, it is uncertain whether this will continue. Thus, an early priority for medical leadership has been the establishment of Methodist-sponsored residency programs. In late 2004,

H I S T O R I C A L



Methodist
DeBakey Heart Center

Methodist received approval from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) as a sponsoring institution. By June 2005, Methodist had established seven programs in pathology and one program in neurological surgery. Five programs (family practice, obstetrics and gynecology, plastic surgery, surgery and transitional year) also were transferred from CHRISTOS St. Joseph Hospital, when it was announced that the institution would be sold and the future of its residency programs uncertain.

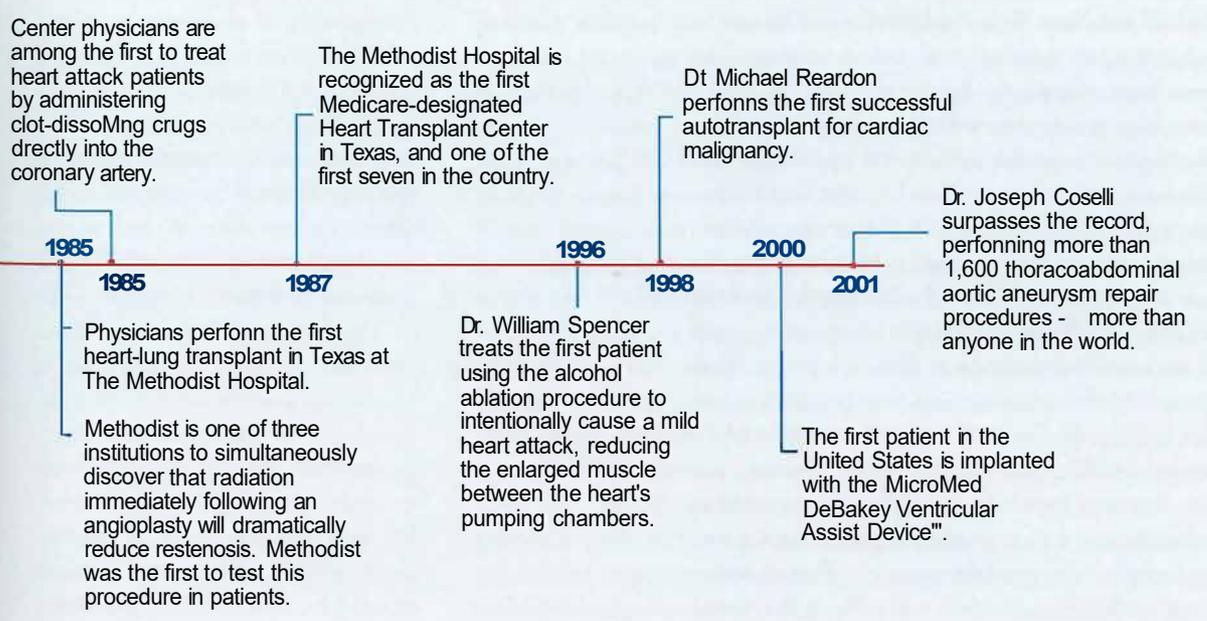
Today, Methodist has more than 90 residents in thirteen programs, with plans to develop a medicine program by 2006-07. Cardiovascular disease and other medicine subspecialties will follow as soon as it is practical. Methodist's affiliation with Weill Cornell and New York-Presbyterian has been instrumental in the establishment of these residency programs, as well providing a world-class educational opportunity to medicine residents from Queens Hospital, a New York-

Presbyterian Hospital affiliate, who have begun to rotate at Methodist.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

The formal affiliation of our three institutions has ensured a rapid exchange of ideas and greatly increased opportunities for research. To foster this, \$550,000 in research grants has been awarded for use in collaborative projects among the three institutions. Methodist DeBakey Heart Center researchers play a prominent role in two of the seven projects that were awarded funds. Dr. Alan Lumsden of the Methodist DeBakey Heart Center and Dr. Yi Yang of Weill Cornell will collaborate in the production and clinical evaluation of a lower extremity radiofrequency coil. This coil allows simultaneous bilateral imaging of the superficial femoral artery (SFA) in the adductor canal - one of the most likely sites of atherosclerosis. This new detection system is anticipated to not only optimize imaging of the SFA, but also to

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significantly decrease patient imaging time.

It is estimated that of the 500,000 coronary artery bypasses completed annually, up to 15% fail. Dr. Daniel Catanzaro of Weill Cornell and Dr. Craig Pratt of the Methodist DeBakey Heart Center are using magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) to determine the effect of a specific aldosterone receptor antagonist (SARA) in promoting adaptive vein graft arteriosclerosis. This study not only fosters collaboration between many medical specialties (internists, radiologists and surgeons), but also promotes using advanced imaging technology rather than invasive techniques to gather data.

Other studies awarded grants include evaluation of the development of atherosclerosis at the genetic level, and the addition of molecular Positron Emission Tomography (PET) imaging to current Intravascular Ultrasound (IVUS) in characterizing the inflammation pattern of atherosclerotic plaques - and ultimately identifying those at risk of rupture. These projects are milestones in the partnership and examples of the many collaborative research efforts to come.

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Another area in which the partnership with Weill Cornell and New York-Presbyterian will benefit is in Methodist's international patient services. The three institutions have developed an international consulting group that will share their many years of collective experience in hospital operations and infrastructure, clinical breakthroughs and education with other countries. In this venture Methodist brings a strong reputation built on a durable and long-lived presence in Latin America and the Middle East. Weill Cornell also brings many years of international experience, having opened Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar in 2002 - the first U.S. medical school that will award its M.D. degree abroad. Each institution contributes multiple facets of expertise - enabling the venture to create the most appropriate programs for a growing hospital in another country. This international consulting division will offer a full range of services - including an exchange of physicians, skills, management and quality measures. Contracts are currently under way with several

international institutions to collaborate in the areas of cardiovascular disease and cancer.

The affiliation among Methodist, Weill Cornell and New York-Presbyterian has been quite fruitful in its first year. The development within The Methodist Hospital and the Methodist DeBakey Heart Center has proceeded at an unparalleled pace, and is just an example of the exciting opportunities such collaboration can offer in the clinical, teaching and research arenas in the years to come.