

1 REMARKS OF GOVERNOR WARREN E. HEARNES  
2 REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
3 DEDICATION OF DEXTER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL  
4 DEXTER, MISSOURI  
5 JULY 6, 1968

6 MR. RINGER: We are indeed honored today to have  
7 as our guest the Vice President of the United States and  
8 Warren Hearnes, Governor of the State of Missouri. It is  
9 very appropriate that our hospital, which has been Stoddard  
10 County's number one project, be dedicated by the highest  
11 officials of our federal and state governments, as this has  
12 been a cooperative federal, state and local project.

13 Governor Hearnes is no stranger to this fine crowd  
14 we have here today, and he is certainly not unfamiliar with  
15 the story of our hospital. During his tenure as Governor  
16 he has kept abreast of our needs and the progress of our fi-  
17 nancial and building program. His office has always been  
18 open when the need has arisen to discuss problems that we  
19 encountered. He and our legislature has been concerned with  
20 the health of our citizens as is evidenced by the recent  
21 implementation of the Medicare and Mediaide programs. I am  
22 sure that as he tours our hospital that he will share in our  
23 pride and sense of accomplishments.

24 Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honored to present your  
25 Governor, the Honorable Warren E. Hearnes.

(Applause)

1 GOVERNOR HEARNES: Vice President Humphrey, dis-  
2 tinguished officials, fellow Southeast Missourians and ladies  
3 and gentlemen:

4 I think the press can and everybody can understand  
5 if we have had somewhat of a change in circumstances since I  
6 first accepted the invitation to speak at this dedication.  
7 As a result of that change in circumstances, I have departed  
8 from the prepared text and speech which I had intended to  
9 deliver here this afternoon. For awhile I thought I was going  
10 to be the principal speaker. I am glad that I could bring  
11 a fellow out from Washington because as John William has  
12 said, if there is anything that can better exemplify what I  
13 have been preaching since I have been Governor, then I don't  
14 know what it would be because as he has stated, this is a  
15 local, state and federal project and this is exactly what I  
16 have been talking about from the day I was inaugurated.

17 When you have a partnership, it cannot be a federal  
18 alone; it cannot be local alone; or it cannot be state alone.  
19 Our days, our societies are just too complex for anyone to  
20 travel the journey alone. And that is why I have preached,  
21 and I mean literally preached the local, state and federal  
22 participation. And I believe that every help that comes from  
23 Washington is better used to the greatest extent for the  
24 betterment of all men when it starts from the local level,  
25 because no one could have worked any harder than the people

1 in this area to realize their dream and their ambitions and  
2 have it come true. We know now what a few years ago they  
3 did not know. If they knew they at least didn't comply.  
4 They didn't fulfill the dreams that everyone has and that is  
5 that we cannot neglect the old, we cannot neglect the needy  
6 and we cannot neglect the sick. And so to the Dexterians,  
7 the Missourians and our federal government in Washington,  
8 D. C., by working together we can make this a much better  
9 place, a much better state and a much better country in which  
10 to live.

11 And now may I present the gentleman that I have  
12 asked to come here and speak in behalf of the federal govern-  
13 ment before this very non-political and bipartisan crowd.  
14 If I may just indulge in one little bit of not politics, but  
15 since I am speaking to so many friends, I would like to in-  
16 troduce the man that I know and know well and like very well,  
17 the Vice President of the United States, the Honorable Hubert  
18 H. Humphrey.

19 (Applause)

20 VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY: Thank you very  
21 much. Thank you very much.

22 (Applause)

23 Thank you Governor Hearnes and Mr. Ringer, Chairman  
24 of the Board of this fine new hospital facility and my friends  
25 Senator Long and Congressman Paul Jones, and as a former

1 Mayor, I always like to pay a special tribute to the Mayor  
2 of the city, Mayor Connors, and all of those of you who are  
3 today participating in this extremely significant ceremony  
4 of dedication.

5 Governor Hearnes, it is always a joy to come to  
6 Missouri and it is a particular joy to come to Southeast  
7 Missouri, and it is a special privilege to come here as your  
8 guest.

9 Now I must tell you that every word that the  
10 Governor said as to the plans of this meeting, that every  
11 word is a fact and is indeed the full truth because when I  
12 accepted an invitation to appear at another place in your  
13 community, I was not at that time told that I would be stop-  
14 ping off at Dexter. But I can tell you that coming first  
15 from Malden and then to Bernie, and coming here to Dexter  
16 is just the way I like to fill in an afternoon. It is good  
17 work and I enjoy every bit of it.

18 (Applause)

19 I am looking forward to getting to Poplar Bluff  
20 where we will finish the evening until I have to go back to  
21 Washington tonight.

22 Now let me say to the mothers and fathers that are  
23 here this afternoon and the grandfathers and grandmothers  
24 that I was with my granddaughters up until 1:00 P.M. this  
25 afternoon, in my bathing suit up at Lake Waverly getting

1 generally mauled by four healthy, active, young grand-  
2 daughters and being worked over by a few of the neighbors.  
3 So if I come here slightly unprepared for a dedicatory cere-  
4 mony, you know it is only because the Governor told me that  
5 he was going to deliver the major speech. He said, what I  
6 would like to have you do, Mr. Vice President, is just be  
7 there and said, be sure you bring the money from the federal  
8 government.

9 In all sincerity, the government has been most  
10 gracious and has shared in this very wonderful experience.

11 I understand that we have two Girl Scouts from  
12 Sweden that are here today with us and I want to welcome  
13 them especially, and I have quite a time with my young friends  
14 who are Girl Scouts. I tell them, you know, that I am a Girl  
15 Scout and they look at me and they say, "you are not either",  
16 and I say, well I am glad of your observation but I visited  
17 the National Girl Scout Headquarters one time and they made  
18 me an honorary member, and I want to welcome these two young  
19 ladies from Sweden.

20 We in Minnesota are very familiar with Swedish de-  
21 scent and we speak svinska lita and everybody when you  
22 say that in my part of the country knows what you mean. I saw  
23 a young lady today from Sweden over at Malden and I said to  
24 her, "Jag alskar dig", and she said, "no you don't", which means  
25 I love you. And she thought I was being just a little bit

1 too forward.

2 Let me just say a word in behalf of your community  
3 here on this important occasion. As I understand it, this is  
4 the first hospital to be constructed, first modern hospital  
5 in Stoddard County. I also understand that you have been  
6 visibly and perseverantly engaged in this enterprise for  
7 better than ten years. That within itself tells something  
8 of the perseverance and the patience and determination of  
9 your people. I know that you have run into all kinds of  
10 obstacles, but I also know that ultimately you were able to  
11 raise the money, most of which was through private contribu-  
12 tions. And my fellow Americans, the unique feature of our  
13 country as compared to many others is this voluntary spirit.

14 Governor Hearnese has properly and eloquently pointed  
15 out that this hospital, the Dexter Memorial Hospital, repre-  
16 sents a partnership, a real partnership at the federal, at  
17 the local and at the private levels of activity. The part-  
18 nership of the federal government is through the appropriation  
19 that came from what we call the Hill-Burton Hospital Program  
20 of over Five Hundred and Eighty-Eight Thousand Dollars, but  
21 you have a hospital here that has cost you well over a  
22 million and I believe my informant told me about a Million,  
23 Three Hundred Thousand. So that the majority of this money  
24 was raised right here, locally, out of pledges, out of contri-  
25 butions from over two thousand contributors. This hospital

1 is more than bricks and mortar, it is more than just facili-  
2 ties, it represents the real love of the community, the real  
3 dedication to our fellow man, of some two thousand personal  
4 contributions. I think that adds a very significant meaning  
5 to it.

6 Now may I also say to this audience that you are  
7 going to find out here what we found out in my little county  
8 where I live in Wright County in Minnesota, the county seat  
9 of a small town called Buffalo. I live in Maryville Town-  
10 ship right near a very small village known as Waverly. Some  
11 twelve years ago Mrs. Humphrey and my daughter, in fact it  
12 was just twelve years ago this July, Mrs. Humphrey and my  
13 daughter were driving into the county seat and they were  
14 going in to do some shopping. In that same month our Buffalo  
15 Memorial Hospital had been dedicated. Before that there was  
16 no hospital in our county. And Mrs. Humphrey was on the  
17 way, in our car, going across an intersection like you have  
18 here and a gentleman ran into the side of the car, and he  
19 had no brakes, and it was a very old car, and he hit her  
20 broadside so to speak, and my daughter was thrown out of  
21 the car into the ditch, and only by the grace of God and  
22 rain was she spared. Literally, she went like a projection  
23 into the side of the embankment filled with mud which  
24 cushioned the blow. The car was destroyed completely and my  
25 wife came to after the shock of it and was able to stop

1 another car that came by. The other car was also destroyed  
2 and the gentleman in it was a very elderly gentleman and was  
3 very seriously injured.

4 To make this tragic story short to you, they were  
5 picked up and they were taken to the Memorial Hospital and  
6 there because there was modern medical care and because the  
7 young lady who was a victim of a concussion, because an  
8 elderly gentleman who was the victim of many, many wounds  
9 and breaking of bones and very serious internal complications,  
10 all of them were spared. A hospital and a doctor, a hospital  
11 and an operating room and a hospital and nurses and doctors.  
12 So I can speak of a Memorial Hospital with something more  
13 than casual interest. I believe I can really say that had  
14 it not have been for that hospital and the medical care that  
15 was there, I might not today be as happy a man as I am be-  
16 cause my daughter might very well have been critically in-  
17 jured and it might have even been fatally and Mrs. Humphrey  
18 likewise.

19 So you are going to remember this day, some of you  
20 because will find that you may have your life saved here and  
21 some young couples will have their loved ones born here and  
22 the hospital will take on a very significant meaning in your  
23 life. This is as much a part of modern living today as an  
24 education. This is as much a part of a modern community as  
25 your church and your home and your business districts. And

1 the only way that I know to give opportunity to young people  
2 and old people alike that want to live in rural America, is  
3 to give them the modern facilities that makes possible a  
4 modern rural America. Otherwise, people are going to leave  
5 rural America as we have known it. The smaller towns and  
6 the rural communities will dry up and when that happens,  
7 America will be different and it will not be as good, but it  
8 doesn't need to happen. Dexter is a fine community. It can  
9 even be a better one and it will be a better one because of  
10 this hospital. And this hospital has made it better because  
11 two thousand people cared enough to say, I want a modern  
12 medical facility.

13 After all, when you have health you have everything.  
14 When you have health, you have life.

15 Just two days ago we celebrated our Fourth of July  
16 and I think we all ought to remember that the men who signed  
17 that immortal document in Philadelphia were men who believed  
18 in life. They believed in it so much they said it was a  
19 gift of God Almighty; an inalienable right to life and to  
20 liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That is what it is  
21 all about - not only to survive but to live a life with  
22 health and a life with an education and a life with some  
23 beauty and to live a life in freedom, and when you live a  
24 life with health and meaningful with education with some  
25 beauty then maybe you can pursue what is man's highest goal,

1 the happiness of his heart and of his spirit and the well-  
2 being of his person.

3 I have sort of adopted this type of a philosophy  
4 for my philosophy of life. I happen to believe that every  
5 man is entitled to these basic, these basic rights. I do  
6 believe in inalienable rights. I do believe in the right to  
7 live not just to survive. I believe in life that is full  
8 and rich and life that can be happy and life that can be  
9 free, but mark my words, no man is free if he is the victim  
10 of an incurable disease and no person is happy when they are  
11 the victim of tragic accidents and disease. No man really  
12 has true life if he is in ill health.

13 So here today we dedicate not just a hospital but  
14 within this spirit of the American way, in the spirit of this  
15 nation, we dedicate another institution that is going to make  
16 possible life, life extended, life protected, life enriched,  
17 and to make it possible for people to be free and free of  
18 disease to have liberty and above all, to make it possible to  
19 pursue the highest goal of mankind, a happy spirit and a  
20 happy heart and a happy purpose in life, rich in the knowledge  
21 that we were created as children of God Almighty, and that our  
22 purpose on this earth is to glorify that great truth in our  
23 life in the richness of our lives.

24 Mr. Mayor and Governor, Senator and Congressman,  
25 and my fellow citizens, I want to thank you for letting me

1 participate in this dedicatory ceremony. I always enjoy this  
2 sort of activity and I will tell you why, because it is  
3 another building bloc in this great country; it is another  
4 edifice and another testimonial to the fact that we can do  
5 what we need to do and that we can do it together and not  
6 government against the people but government of the people,  
7 by the people and for the people, and not government that is  
8 over the people but government by the consent of the governed  
9 and then the people themselves sovereign in their own power,  
10 strong in their own rights, always ready in their own way  
11 to take care of themselves. Thank you very much.

12 (Applause)

Address of Governor Warren E. Hearnes  
Dedication, Dexter Memorial Hospital  
Dexter, Missouri  
Saturday, 6 July 1968, 4:30 p.m.

Release: 4:30 p.m.  
6 July 1968

Thomas Carlyle once said..."Our main business is not to see what dimly lies ahead, but to do what clearly lies at hand..."

Because you here today believed that, we are here to dedicate the Dexter Memorial Hospital as a monument of result. In this case, result can only be defined as the ultimate achievement of applied inspiration, functional planning, and earnest endeavor.

I am especially pleased that your inspiration, your planning and your work is in keeping with the change that is taking place across Missouri.

It is a change that is taking this state to its proper place of leadership among the other states...a place of prominence in the nation. It is a change that has been long overdue. It is a change that is just beginning. It is a change called "progress".

Never before have the citizens of Missouri been so aware of the needs that face them. Never before have they been so willing to meet those needs with result.

I am deeply gratified that the needs I see are seen also by the thousands of men and women in this state who are willing to channel their creative energies into useful projects.

(more)

It is through such willingness that progress is born.

Because I have long recognized Missouri's needs in the three great fields of health, education, and welfare, I have spent much of my effort in finding ways to meet those needs.

I see clearly today that I have not been alone in my efforts.

We should not malign the past for its failures, however. It has been said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

It is through understanding the past that we can chart the course of our future.

Our past is still very much with us. It was not so long ago that our older citizens, as well as many of our mentally ill and physically infirm, were doomed to waste away under a costly and unmanageable system of custodial care.

Today we can offer those citizens treatment and rehabilitation, not just custody.

All of us have a responsibility to care for our old, our sick, and our needy.

(more)

The facility that we are here to dedicate is evidence that our responsibility is being both well recognized and well met.

Recognition of a problem can bring about change, but I believe that recognizing a problem isn't enough. It is because I believe that change can only be brought about by applied effort I have worked toward bringing about change.

I began by suggesting new programs to the legislature.

As an example, I recommended the revision of the special education law to extend coverage to emotionally and socially exceptional children. I also suggested an increase of state reimbursement for existing programs.

While figures do not tell the whole story of progress, let me point out that the expenditure of public funds for elementary, secondary, and higher education exceeded 800-million-dollars in Missouri in the last fiscal year.

I have recommended, and the General Assembly has approved, revisions of the school foundation program. Those revisions have resulted in more money to more schools for better education for our young people.

Those are not the only changes I have recommended in the field of education.

(more)

There have been many more. Some have been implemented. Others are being considered. The result has been progress.

For our senior citizens, I, like many of you, saw a need for increased facilities and benefits. I recommended those changes to the legislature and again the result was progress, the only true measure of change.

For needy families, I suggested vital revisions be made in existing laws. The adoption of those suggestions has brought visible progress.

I have not been alone in my efforts to bring progress to Missouri.

As far back as the mid 1950's, the community leaders of Dexter and the surrounding Stoddard County area felt a need existed for local hospital facilities. Several attempts were made to develop a building program and establish a financial basis to realize such facilities.

A hospital committee was formed and set to work by employing a consulting firm to conduct a professional survey of the existing needs and to make recommendations based on the findings.

The study was completed in the Spring of 1957, with the recommendation that a 50-bed hospital be built to serve the area residents. While some result was achieved, it was not until a new group was formed in 1960 that the matter was taken to the voters.

(more)

The bond election of May, 1961, came close to success, but was about one-hundred votes short of the required two-thirds majority. A second election fared no better.

Still another group of interested citizens took the matter in hand.

They looked into the reasons why the bond issues failed. They found that residents living in the east and west areas of the county were being served by hospitals in Poplar Bluff, Sikeston and Cape Girardeau.

Those residents saw no advantage to justify voting additional taxes for a new hospital.

In the light of their knowledge, the committee gave consideration to forming a Hospital District that would include the townships of Castor, Richland, Liberty and Elk.

Taking the idea to the voters, the committee got approval on a partial basis.

It was apparent by then that if a hospital facility was going to be constructed in Dexter it would have to be funded by public subscription rather than by taxation.

On October 9, 1964, nine residents of Dexter signed Articles of incorporation for filing under Missouri's "General Not For Profit Act".

(more)

The name selected for the corporation was the Dexter Memorial Hospital.

By March of 1965, a total of 14 sites had been considered by the new board. On May 3rd of that year a representative of the Division of Health met with the Board and this site was accepted.

Application for federal assistance was filed on that same day, reflecting a budget of 930-thousand-dollars. The local matching funds would amount to 480-thousand-dollars, an amount that probably seemed to some to be unobtainable.

The goal was high and the task difficult.

But on December 11th of 1965, John Ringer, the President of the Board of Directors, reported to the Division of Health that 12-hundred pledges had been obtained.

Not 480-thousand-dollars had been raised, but almost 600-thousand-dollars...120-thousand-dollars more than the goal.

The rest is history. On March 31st of 1966, the Missouri Hospital Advisory Council approved recommendations by the Division of Health to allocate 588-thousand-dollars under the Hill-Burton Program to the Dexter Memorial Hospital.

(more)

Contracts on the bids were signed December 19th and the one-and-a-quarter-million-dollar Dexter Memorial Hospital became a reality.

There are many who gave of their time and their effort who deserve credit, but just as the State of Missouri cannot rest in the comfort of its recent achievements, the leaders of this area cannot now afford to be satisfied with the progress that has been made.

Together we must turn our attention to the other needs that face us. We must continue to be aware that there are other goals toward which we must continue to work.

We see in the Dexter Memorial Hospital a worthy example of cooperative effort.

We have seen what recognition of a problem, and willingness to solve that problem, can do.

We must dedicate ourselves now to new applications of that recognition and willingness. We must seek new inspiration for our efforts.

I urge you today to heed the words of Winston Churchill...

"There is no use saying, 'We are doing our best'...when what really is important is to be doing what is necessary."

Visit Of

Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey

Dexter Memorial Hospital

Platform Guests

Front Row

Rev. Robert McCoy, Pastor, United Methodist Church

Rev. Ben Russell, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church

Mayor Willis Conner

Congressman Paul C. Jones

Senator Edward V. Long

Joe Weber, Civic Leader

Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey

Governor Warren E. Hearnes

John Wm. Ringer, Chairman of Dexter Memorial Hospital Board

Jim Smyth, Board Member

Yewell Lawrence, Board Member

Frank Schneider, Board Member

E. L. Keathley, Board Member

Back Row

Mrs. Kenton Sisler, Family of Lt. Sisler

David Sisler, Family of Lt. Sisler

Mrs. George Sisler, Family of Lt. Sisler

Mr. George Sisler, Family of Lt. Sisler

Mrs. Elenore Sisler, Board Member - grandmother of Lt. Sisler

} Rev Clergy

Mayor of Conner  
Cong Jones  
Sen Long

John Ringer

Mr Weber

Gov Hearnes

11 years - Perseverance

Cong Medal of Honor  
Lt Sisler  
Jane - Son David  
& James

2 Girl Scouts from  
Sweden

Notes on Dexter Memorial Hospital

First hospital ever constructed in Stoddard County (population 30,000 -- population of Dexter is 7,200).

Cost of hospital is \$1,300,000 -- \$588,000 of Hill-Harris money (Federal funds) and remainder contributed locally. Largest pledge was \$25,000 -- there were 2,000 contributors. 487

The hospital was 11 years in becoming a reality, starting with the architectural renderings in 1957.

50-patient hospital -- the most modern between St. Louis and Memphis.

Mayor Wayne  
Mitchell  
(of Bernice)

~~Malden Munio Argent~~  
~~Mayor Durka~~

Dexter MEMORIAL  
HOSP

Mrs Jane Sisler + Sons  
James + David  
(w. of H. Geo Sisler)

±

Geo Hearnes, + Betty -  
President!  
John Ringer - Hosp. Bd.



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)