

Narrator's name: Roy B. Fisher, D.O.
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Roy B. Fisher was a co-founder of the Fort Worth Osteopathic Hospital and a pioneer friend of TCOM. He is also a past chairman of the Board of the Fort Worth Osteopathic Medical Center and a certified surgeon by the American Osteopathic Association. He is a Fellow in the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons. Dr. Fisher graduated from the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1933.

Mr. Stokes: Dr. Roy--I am going to call you Dr. Roy--you're one of my favorites, so instead of Dr. Fisher, I am going to say Dr. Roy. When did you first come to Fort Worth and what prompted your decision?

Dr. Fisher: Ray, I came to Fort Worth originally in the Fall of 1944. I was doing a surgical preceptorship in Kirksville at that time under Dr. Laughlin, Jr., and my brother, Dr. Raymond Fisher, who later came to Fort Worth, was taking the boards. So, I studied with the students in Kirksville and took the boards that fall in 1944. Then my brother came to Fort Worth in 1945. Originally, Drs. Marille and Sam Sparks in Dallas, Texas, had sought doctors from Kirksville to come to Texas to start practice and there was no osteopathic hospital in Fort Worth at that time. So, my brother prompted me to come to Fort Worth. So I bought a very large, old mansion in January, 1946, which later became the Fort Worth Osteopathic Hospital.

Mr. Stokes: Where was that located?

Dr. Fisher: That was located at 1402 Summit. It has since then been torn down. This was considered the old "silk stocking row" at the turn of the century. There were big, huge mansions there. The All-Church Children's Home was on the corner and Dr. Touzel, who had five children, lived next door to me. Then

there were the Hardings and the Ellisons and the Hugh Wagner home on the corner. All have, of course, since been torn down. I bought this home, from Allen Armstrong, who was the Texas Steel man here in town, but the original builder was Dr. Durringer, an old-time medical physician here in Fort Worth. And, as a matter of fact, he was rather prominent at that time, and I can remember that there was no line in from the Texas Electric Company at that time because he was their physician. So, this is where we started and we started with two beds and ended up with twelve. This is how we started a hospital here in Fort Worth. It was first known as the Fisher Hospital because my brother and I started it, but then we incorporated in June, 1946, as Fort Worth Osteopathic Hospital.

Mr. Stokes: Dr. Roy, in addition to you and your brother in the beginning, who else was involved with you?

Dr. Fisher: We had several other doctors in town besides my brother and me at this time. There was Dr. Hugo Ranelle, ^{Dr.}/Lester Hamilton, Dr. Arthur Clinch, Dr. Sloan Miller, Dr. Virgil Jennings, Dr. LaCroy, Dr. Danny Beyer, Dr. Catherine Kinney Carlton, and her mother, Dr. Helen Kinney, Dr. L. V. Parker, Dr. Hatcher, Dr. Horace Walker, Dr. Richard Briscoe, Dr. J. R. Thompson, Dr. Luibel, Dr. Fountain, Dr. Phil Russell, and Dr. Roy Russell. When we originally incorporated in June of that year, we originally incorporated for \$5,000. It was rather amazing that I remember Dr. Helen Kinney, Dr. Catherine Carlton's mother, who said that she was so happy to have a hospital in town that was osteopathic. She knew she would never be able to put a patient in there, but she wanted this hospital to go.

Mr. Stokes: Well, that's very good. I wonder, can you reflect on some significant cause or reason that your undertaking succeeded?

I know you had a number of obstacles and handicaps, but there is bound to be some driving force that gave you some sight at the end of the tunnel, so to speak.

Dr. Fisher: Here again, there were no hospitals in Fort Worth that were open to osteopathic physicians. And, we needed a hospital badly and everyone in Fort Worth, as well as some of the doctors outside of Fort Worth, like Dr. Clinch and Dr. Fountain, were so cooperative that the group, as a whole, was rather an adhesive group and we had many parties together. We had open houses and used to have Christmas parties at the hospital and the wives of the doctors would come in and between the nurses and the doctors wives they made it a very, very happy time. So, I believe, really it was the cooperation of all the physicians in our osteopathic hospital that helped to make the hospital succeed.

Mr. Stokes: Well, that's good. I'm going to ask this question in sort of three-fold, if I can. In beginning, how long was the hospital located on Summit Avenue, and what was your next move, and then when did you move to your present site?

Dr. Fisher: The hospital on Summit was one in which we were there for five years and then, in 1951, we had built a 25-bed hospital on Camp Bowie Blvd.

Mr. Stokes: Where is that located on Camp Bowie? It is close to your present site. Is it about the 3700 block?

Dr. Fisher: It is the 3700 block of Camp Bowie. That's right. Then we were in that building for five years before we moved up on Montgomery

at our present site. So, we moved there in 1956, roughly about
each
ten years' time--about five years /in the two previous buildings.
The lot on Camp Bowie was one where we built the second hospital--the 25-bed hospital--that was given to Dr. Phil Russell through Amon Carter, Sr. And, this is where we began to have quite a bit of the cooperation from the Carter Foundation.

Mr. Stokes: Well, don't you think his association with the Star-Telegram managed to give our profession a very good image and identity through his influence of what might have been put in the newspapers in those days? Did that help any at all?

Dr. Fisher: If we did not have help from the Carter Foundation and the Fort Worth Star Telegram and Dr. Phil Russell's influence with Amon Carter, Sr. . . .

Mr. Stokes: Now, he was Mr. Carter's physician, wasn't he?

Dr. Fisher: He was Mr. Carter's physician and when he became ill he, of course, would be in other hospitals, but, at one time, this is the reason why he resigned from Harris Hospital Board, because they weren't open to any other physicians than their own. And the cooperation between the Star Telegram and the Carter Foundation even lent itself further when we got into the incorporation stage because if we hadn't had them and, also the fact that they placed two members on our board, we would never have gotten along as well as we had and I can remember one of the dear old attorneys in Fort Worth by the name of Sidney Samuels, who is an old, old-time attorney, and who was also placed through Amon Carter, Sr., to help us incorporate. The man never accepted a dime and he was a very small diminutive man, but he carried an awful lot

all
of weight/around the state as far as legal practice was concerned.

Mr. Stokes: Wasn't he at one time, didn't he employ our good friend Abe Herman? Didn't Abe Herman, as a young man, join Samuels' firm?

Dr. Fisher: Yes, that's right. Abe Herman is now the attorney for the hospital, and also was in that firm. He later became the attorney for our hospital. But, Sidney Samuels was a jewel.

Mr. Stokes: He certainly was. But, in those days, I was at the Star Telegram and I know the influence he had there.

Dr. Fisher: He was very well recognized around the State. The fact is that he created the corporate papers in Austin which were rather unusual because of the non-profit nature with a closed staff that we had.

Mr. Stokes: Dr. Roy, you have hit on some highlights of your early experiences but, can you think of any other "red-letter days" during those early years or "red letter" experiences? You have mentioned about Mr. Carter and his influence.

Dr. Fisher: I can remember so many things, Ray, that when I go through some of the thoughts that I might have regarding old times and this hospital there are rather lengthy and unusual and so on. I know that I can remember another instance in which I went before the city commission in order to get a tentative approval on this building for our hospital and, I think, at that time the city manager's name was Mr. Jones. And I know the city building inspector was a Mr. Larson. And, I was rather naive, I am sure, trying to appear before this august board, but nevertheless, I got down there and Mr. Jones said "Dr. Fisher, why don't you let me present this to the city commission for you?". And, I

said "I would be very happy." And, if it weren't for the fact that Mr. Jones, coached previously by Mr. Amon Carter, Sr., that some of these things would never have transpired. Here, again, there is the close association between Dr. Phil Russell and Mr. Amon Carter, Sr. And, then I can remember the time when we had so much difficulty in getting insurance recognition for surgical procedures. One time, there was an occasion of a company, I believe they were headquartered in Waco, but the board was comprised of all M.D. physicians. We had done a surgical case and they weren't going to pay. We took them to court. We won and never had any trouble from them thereafter. The same way Blue Cross was a little bit reluctant at one time, although, they came into the fold. But the insurance company with General Dynamics was really a very good ^{benefit} / from the very start. Another thing I think of so many years back is the flood. I think it was either 1948 or 1949 and I can remember the flood was so high that it went up to the second floor of the Montgomery Ward building and that was a large expanse of water between the bridge where we were on Summit over to the next hills where the Fort Worth Osteopathic Hospital/^{now}stands. And, there was a vast expanse of water there. You could see chickens going down in crates and everything else in the world,/^{too.} There was no water in town and I had a former patient who lived out of town. He had a big gasoline truck. He used to haul water in to us so that we could put it into our commodes so that we could flush the toilets in the hospital. He would back this huge gasoline truck filled with water from someplace around Granbury or Alvarado and haul water into the hospital by the buckets and fill the

commodes and such. This man still comes in and I will never forget the man because some of these things that happen to you only happen once in a lifetime. When the flood occurred, we were giving typhoid shots around Fort Worth. We made quite a big play because we gave typhoid shots to so many people. Three or four hundred. We had long lines of people come in getting their shots for nothing that the Health Department and Dr. Bradshaw thought we did a wonderful job. We used to have lines clear from the hospital out to the street which was maybe two hundred ^{feet} /or so away. There was a lot of recognition given at that time.

Mr. Stokes: Thank you, Dr. Roy. You know, in 1981, I believe, you completed an expansion program over at the hospital. It's a little hard. I want to say "FWOH" and now your name has changed just a little bit and put in the "Medical Center", Fort Worth Osteopathic Medical Center. I understand you are getting ready to embark on another expansion program. What factors were responsible for this decision?

Dr. Fisher: Well, we're only up to 200 beds right now and we need private rooms very badly. I think the fact that we have to increase our intensive care unit and coronary care unit in the hospital because of overloads at many times. But we also have a great number of physicians who now have come into the areas between the College and the Hospital itself that have specialization and what we call sub-specialties in some of the various areas. The number of doctors that we have in the area is growing and we need increased facilities that cover both kidney dialysis and scanners and digital subtraction and things of this nature

that we never had in the old times when we first started. So, I think with, the increased physician population, there will be a great need more than what we have at the present time. At the present time, we are full quite often.

Mr. Stokes: I see. Well, that's fine. Dr. Roy, could you tie in your hospital activities with those that led to the founding of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine? You never did forge to the forefront. You always were in the background, in the shadows of those who were active but you were very influential and I would like to know some of your experiences.

Dr. Fisher: Well, that's very kind of you to say, Ray Stokes. You know, this would date back before even the thought of a charter for the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine and I can remember Labor Day weekends at what used to be the old Western Hills Motel. . .

Mr. Stokes: Out on Camp Bowie.

Dr. Fisher: This was when Dr. George Luibel and Dr. Carl Everett and Dr. Danny Beyer would get together on a Labor Day weekend with their wives and we'd all go out and have thoughts about maybe something could be done. And, I feel that they were really the founding members, which they are. They did have the support of other doctors in the community, but the credit should go to them.

Mr. Stokes: What was the prime factor that influenced your becoming a strong supporter? I imagine some of the things that you have just alluded to, but you might want to expand.

Dr. Fisher: We started the college on the fifth floor of the hospital on the west wing and we, naturally, had a feeling of support for both the college and the hospital that was ^a mutual feeling as far as progress was concerned and the fact that you could

have a college and develop strong osteopathic principles in the community would be a major factor into how much support we could get from the community. And, I feel that if I was ever a strong supporter, I would be in lesser limelight than Carl Everett, because he has, by far, helped create favorable cooperation between the hospital . . .

Mr. Stokes: In addition to the past, he is still a very strong factor now, you know, by virtue of his being the President or Chairman-- I'm not sure of the title--of the TCOM Foundation. He has made a great contribution there.

Dr. Fisher: I feel like Carl Everett. I feel that I have done well through my osteopathic profession and, if I have succeeded, I feel that something should go back to the profession and I support not only my alma mater of Kirksville, but I also support TCOM.

Mr. Stokes: You, know, in that vein, Dr. Roy, I know I am the interviewer and not the interviewee, but, in as much as I have been identified with the school since its beginning and was the business manager the first four years, I, for one can appreciate, and I feel like all the good things--well there are just not enough good remarks to make about the cooperation that we got from the hospital because I know you charged us, supposedly, \$40,000 a year rent for over there on those 10,000 square feet that we had. Well, I haven't ever seen any \$40,000 and I know that you haven't either. So, that was a paper transaction which made it very possible for us to succeed.

Dr. Fisher: Well, I'm just happy to suport TCOM and I do so every year.

Mr. Stokes: Good. In that respect, I know that you will possibly agree with this and I wonder if . . . I know that you agree that the late

R.
Dr. Phil/Russell was a personality who will long be remembered in the annals of Texas osteopathy. Can you comment on his contribution and professional influence on both the hospital and, certainly and particularly, on the College?

Dr. Fisher: Well, Dr. Phil was an unusual personality. In fact, he was a character. And, I can say so many things ^{about} / Dr. Phil, but I will always remember that he was a person who never endeavored to gain financial status for himself and that he promoted osteopathy in Fort Worth like no one else I have ever known. And, he is the one who was the personal physician of Amon Carter, Sr., and I can always remember the times that Amon Carter, Sr., would try to have. Sid Richardson ^{into} put some money / the hospital ^{whether} / Sid Richardson was reluctant or not. Either Amon Carter twisted his arm or Phil Russell who also treated Sid Richardson ^{he} through good days and bad days. Also/had such an influence on our growth here in Fort Worth that you can't say anything that Dr. Phil Russell did wrong because he did so many good things for this profession that I think we are forever indebted to him. He was a good politician. He went to Austin and we used to go with him and could show you the way around. He met lots of people and knew people in high places. He could get you into a lot of places with his personality that a lot of people would never attempt to go.

Mr. Stokes: He opened a lot of doors, I am sure.

Dr. Fisher: Absolutely.

Mr. Stokes: Well, Dr. Roy, as we come to the close of this interview, maybe ^{be} you have some thoughts--may/a short conclusion or resume or any of the personal reflections that you haven't alluded to

at this time that do come to your mind. Is there any final remarks that you want to make pertaining to the identity and the close relationship that we have had the last ten or fifteen years between the health center--the hospital--and the learning center--the college?

Dr. Fisher: Well, Ray, my feelings are this. I think my brother first led me here to the Fort Worth area and there have been so many wonderful associates, nurses, and physicians, and people that you meet in a lifetime that are still your friends. I see some of the second and third generations of these people that we have even delivered babies for here in Fort Worth who are now working for Fort Worth Osteopathic Hospital, as well as other responsible positions around the state. I know, even today, we have a patient in the hospital that we have had as patients since we first moved to town in June, 1946 and they are still coming back to us during these times. So, I think we are very fortunate in having this kind of relationship. And, I feel maybe this is the way our Presbyterian belief in church helps you to go along some of these roads you never know that you are going to go. My wife, Peggy and I had three daughters in Michigan, two sons here in Fort Worth, and I think the combination of the work and happiness I have had within my own family and church and, above all, respect for the osteopathic profession is what we are all hoping that we are going to continue to have.

Mr. Stokes: You were mentioning Michigan. Are you from Michigan originally--you haven't said where you were from, other than you schooling.

Dr. Fisher: I was born in Ohio, southern Ohio, surrounded by Cincinnati, but

I spent most of my time in through college days in Michigan and I went to Kirksville from Michigan. When I left there to start my practice, I had practiced in Missouri. I interned first in California after Kirksville--in Los Angeles.

Mr. Stokes: Los Angeles?

Dr. Fisher: At Wilshire Hospital, which is now a medical hospital. Then I went to Missouri. Then I went back to Michigan with a Dr. North-
the first
way who was / surgeon in the state of Michigan. And, I got to do surgery and I used to take post-graduate work from time to time around the United States and I finally went back and did a preceptorship with Dr. Laughlin, Jr., before I came here.

Mr. Stokes: Well, Dr. Roy, it's been a pleasure to discuss some of the experiences that you have had in the past and your identity and the fact that you are--I'm going to label you one of the strongest friends of TCOM we are proud to have been associated with. It has been a pleasure to be with you and to conduct this interview today. This is Ray Stokes of the Oral History Section of the Library. It seems Dr. Roy has his finger up and may want to say something else. Go ahead, Dr. Roy.

Dr. Fisher: Well, I just want to say that life is wonderful and we are happy that TCOM is here and we want both of us to grow.

Mr. Stokes: Thank you, sir.