



A portrait of the MHC's first and founding curator, Barbara Van Brimmer, MLIS, was unveiled at the 10th anniversary celebration of the Medical Heritage Center on May 17, 2007. The portrait will hang in the center and was made possible due to the generous contribution of an anonymous donor.

Visit us on the web at <http://mhc.med.ohio-state.edu/>



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## House Call

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# House Call

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## Letter from the Head Curator and Editor: Peering Into the Future of the Medical Heritage Center (MHC)

This special edition of *House Call* is dedicated to the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Center in May, 2007. In just ten short years, the center has grown from a few scattered collections into the thriving institution we have today. The Center is proud to boast a growing and active Scholar-in-Residence program, a strong slate of public programming, endowments, and collections that are growing both physically and virtually through the MHC's new digital library project.

The next ten years are sure to be as active and exciting. The collections of the Medical Heritage Center continue to expand, with the addition of large and nationally note-worthy collections such as the Arthur G. James, MD collection. The Center is building collections that are more representative of all the richness central Ohio has to offer, including more materials from the nursing, dental, and public health communities as well as materials from underrepresented populations, such as minorities and women. With this in mind, the MHC will bring several national and regional traveling exhibits to the central Ohio community, including exhibits on Ohio Nursing leaders, Women Physicians, and African American surgeons. The Scholar-in-Residence program will continue along its prolific path, with more monographs on local luminaries as well as works intended for a national audience. Finally, the MHC hopes to increase the visibility and size of its digital collections, making the treasures of the Center accessible to a worldwide audience.

We are privileged that Paul Metzger, MD, one of the earliest supporters of the MHC has agreed to provide his perspective on our history in this special issue. His commentary follows in the next piece.

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Portrait of Barbara Van Brimmer unveiled at 10th anniversary celebration

# What Hath Ten Years Wrought? A Few Reflections

by Paul Metzger

The celebration of achieving ten years of the existence of the Medical Heritage Center is a time to briefly pause and reflect on its remarkable accomplishments. Born out of the vision of a dedicated and energetic librarian who had a penchant for medical history and the fortuitous timing of an active history committee of the Columbus Medical Association seeking a repository for local medical history, the center has developed and progressed to a facility well beyond the dreams of its founders.

In its brief ten years, the Medical Heritage Center has not only become a well organized rare book library and a significant collection of health sciences artifacts but now has become a facility for historical exhibitions, a repository of archives, and the source of several scholarly publications. As we pause for this ten year anniversary, it seems fitting to mention a bit of detail about the evolution of the MHC.



**Metzger**

When the history committee of the Columbus Medical Association (at that time The Columbus Academy of Medicine) was searching for a repository of local medical history, our first curator, assistant professor and head of collection development at the Prior Health Sciences Library Barbara Van Brimmer was developing a vision for a medical history center. Dr. Manuel Tzagournis, then Dean of The College of Medicine, suggested that as the library was preparing for a major renovation, there could be space for a medical history center. With a bit of lobbying from the history committee and endorsement from the Academy president, funding was initiated from the Columbus Medical Association Foundation and matched by The College of Medicine, and the Medical Heritage Center became a reality.

The continued cooperation of the medical community and the College of Medicine working through an advisory group has successfully guided the MHC to its present state of pre-eminence.

Through the formative stages and in its early days, the vision, direction and organizational ability of Barbara Van Brimmer was the “glue” that made the center what it is today. Words are insufficient to describe the time, effort and ingenuity of Barb as she spent untold hours visiting families of distinguished physicians and explained the need for those collections. Such efforts resulted in obtaining The Robert M. Zollinger Collection, the William G. Myers Collections, and other important collections. Barb visited The Sisters of The Poor in Cincinnati to obtain records of old St. Francis Hospital and she repeatedly made field excursions investigating pertinent medical history such as perusing the old Ben Franklin TB Hospital as it was facing demolition and the hours sifting through files of the Columbus Hospital Federation stored in a dusty downtown warehouse.

Barb’s passing in 2003 was a tragic loss but her spirit remains, fulfilling much of her earlier vision. Progress continues by her able and energetic successor Judy Weiner. Scholarly publications by John Burnham, PhD, George Paulson, MD, and Charles Wooley, MD have made outstanding contributions and have enhanced the Center’s image.

The center has been indeed fortunate to have had and continues to have support and encouragement from our library director Susan Krill. Her guidance and sharing along budgetary lines has been vital to the MHC.

A look back would be incomplete if the role of the advisory group was not mentioned in this commemoration. From the Center’s inception, the group, consisting of representatives from The Columbus Medical Association, The Ohio State University College of Medicine, and at-large members from the nursing, dentistry, public health and health sciences communities, has been an involved, enthusiastic and contributory body. Enough cannot be said about the role this group has played in the Center’s success. The linkage between the medical community, The College of Medicine, and the health sciences communities is a demonstration of the strength that can be derived from such sources. The continued matching funding is an example of such a linkage. The assistance and guidance of the Columbus Medical Association Executive Director in planning for the center’s future has been invaluable.

Seldom has our community experienced this level of support and cooperation, a special role for the Center which should be maintained for years to come. These ten years have been rewarding and most productive. The Center has survived a tragic loss and has moved on to many successes. A congratulatory “well done” should be given to all those participating in this very special endeavor.

## Join in the Celebration!

You can help support the work of the Medical Heritage Center by considering a contribution in the form of a tax deductible gift. All gifts received will be placed in the Medical Heritage Center general development fund, which will support the collections, scholarship, and public programming of the Medical Heritage Center.

Contributors giving at the \$100 level and above will become members of the Curator’s 10th Anniversary Circle, which includes recognition in forthcoming Medical Heritage Center publications. Circle-level supporters will also have their names added to a commemorative plaque to be located in the Medical Heritage Center at the end of the anniversary year and will also receive a complimentary signed copy of Dr. Wooley’s book, *The Second Blessing: Columbus Medicine and Health, The Early Years*.

**To donate please clip and return this form to: Medical Heritage Center, Prior Health Sciences Library, 376 West Tenth Ave., Columbus, OH 43210**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Curator’s 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Circle

Yes, I would like to make a gift to the Medical Center Heritage Fund.

Enclosed is my check, made payable to The Medical Heritage Center in the amount of:

\$100 (curator’s anniversary circle)

\$250 (curator’s silver circle)

\$500 (curator’s gold circle)

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Contributors who donate gifts at and above \$100 will receive a copy of *The Second Blessing: Columbus Medicine and Health, The Early Years* in the mail.