

By 1977 we had established enough of a track record. Our students were being transferred, several had come back to Nevada to practice. So, we no longer were just betting “on the come” as they say in gambling, we weren’t saying this is what we think is going to happen. We actually had five years experience. They saw that we could do what we said we could do. We had gotten the two-year kids through and now they were graduating. We actually had “bodies” with M.D. degrees attached. We had gone out and raised, as we said earlier, almost all the money for the buildings. (eighty-five to ninety percent) Of course even the legislature always took credit for the Hughes’ money and assigned it to the state appropriated funds. They always stuck that in there which use to gall George and me. Because they were handed a gift, but anyway, that is politics.

EB: The Hughes money was still coming in at that the time?

TS: Yes, I think that it was a twenty-year gift. It was originally going to be six million over twenty years and they renegotiated later to four million over twenty years. They cut it down. I can remember we hadn’t started building the Savitt. So, at that time, we had the Anderson Building and then down below on the side of the hill we had the Manville Building with an auditorium. We use to walk down the stairs or slide down the hill in the wintertime. We would walk down the stair to go from one building to the next. It made logical sense to put the Savitt Building right in-between with the deans office on the ground floor and the library on the second floor and that is ultimately what happened. But, at the time, there were two separate buildings with a big wind tunnel down the middle. It wasn’t attached at the front and it wasn’t attached at the back, although that was the intent. Two separate buildings. We had the freshmen now in the Anderson Building and the sophomores in the Manville Building with the auditorium. George had an office were Jerry May now sits and I had the office right next to it where Dagmar now sits. There was a big opening with room dividers where we had secretaries, Phil Gillette and others. I can remember we all gathered in George’s office the day they voted in April 1977 and opened up a bottle of Champaign.

Even though the legislature authorized the conversion of the school, which the regents had to have, that was only a piece of it. You still had to convince the federal government that you could do it, so that they would give you the two million dollars conversion grant. That was federal HEW money. Then we had to convince the LCME that we could do it so that they would accredit it . So, we had a series of visits from April 15, until the end of June. We had people coming all

the time from the federal government. Ken Moritsuga was the fellow who came from the federal government. He is now a big shot. He actually made a career out of the public health service. People from the LCME would come and we would spend several days with them. We would talk over what we were going to do and what we told the legislature. It became clear that we were not going to be able to get enough obstetricians or a hospital in Reno to support a OB/GYN clerkship. So, I called my friends, several who had been running the residency down in Las Vegas for several years, Joe Rowges and Bill Wickstead, and they said we will do it down here. Then we had to talk to the LCME because then we were saying was we would have ninety percent of the clinical programs in Reno, but the students would have to go down to Las Vegas, or at that time it was going to be eight weeks of OB.

EB: I can't imagine they thought it would be remotely workable?

TS: Well, there was a lot of question about it. Later on as we will discuss Claude Howard who had been one of our benefactors gave the school, for several years, apartments in which the OB students lived free of charge. We said, "Okay, we will do it." When we really talked to some of the people at the LCME and others, you really come down to it, yes it is important to have students in the same location, but lets face it. It was known that the students in OB don't see anybody else from morning till night from one week to the next. They are doing OB and don't know what else is going on. As a matter of fact, there are medical schools around the country that are thirty to forty stories high and the people on the twentieth floor never talk to the people on the tenth floor. So, as a matter of fact....

EB: What is the logistics of them moving back and forth?

TS: It was not easy but we hoped that we would get apartments for them. Ultimately that turned out to be the case, we didn't know it at the time. Anyway, the LCME agreed on June 29, 1977, that the school of medicine could get a letter of reasonable assurance that essentially says that we believed that they can do what they have said. It is now July '77 and I am exhausted. I really had worked my tail off. I was going to take a vacation. Celia and I, as you know, had spent three years in Spain. Celia's mother was from Spain. Celia's mother still had two sisters living in northern Spain and she had three sisters living here in the United States. We said why don't we all go to Spain, I need a vacation before we start the next push. So, Celia and I took her mother and her two sisters back to a reunion with two other sisters who had lived in Spain since before

the Spanish Civil War. The five of them were in the same room, I think, for the first time since our wedding.

EB: You are talking about the mother's sisters?

TS: Yes, Celia's mother and her four sisters. I think the last time they had actually been in the same room was when the two from Spain came to the United States when Celia and I were married. So, that was 1956, about eleven years earlier. So, we went back and had a wonderful vacation. Seeing old friends. Actually Celia and I left the five of them together and we wondered around.

EB: Where did you go?

TS: We went all over, through Spain and Portugal. From Madrid and we drove north. They all came from a small town in the northwestern area called LaCoruña which is in that little piece of Spain that sits out over Portugal, right out in the Atlantic Ocean.

EB: Did you go back to the Air Base?

TS: Yes, sure, and saw all of my friends and some of the nurses were still there. We had left and came home in 1964 and this is now 1977. So, that is thirteen years.

EB: Weren't you getting a little..... or missing a little bit of the childcare, taking care of the patients?

TS: No, I really sort of had gotten out of that for that year.

EB: Were you missing it or did you have time to do anything?

TS: I didn't have a lot of time to miss it and I think that the challenge the excitement then was getting this proposal through the legislature, getting it approved by all of the outside bodies and actually seeing students start.

EB: You were having nothing but successes really for your hard work. You didn't have a lot of setbacks?

TS: Not at this point.

EB: Everything was working.

TS: So far it was working. It was all on paper and everyone was hoping. Yes, we were getting the approvals. Of course, ultimately the chickens would come home to roost and we would have

to prove it by doing it. At that point, in the spring or summer of 1977, we said that we would hire the necessary faculty within one year and have the first juniors start their junior year one later. They were going to start in July of 1978. That was also part of the requirement for the federal government. We were on the tail end of the conversion money and they said you have to get this started and get these students going by the academic year of 1978. We had a year and one half from the time that we started. The legislature approved the conversion in April of 1977 and we had fourteen months to go. So, before I went on vacation I was still in charge of the conversion and George is doing his thing. He put together six committees each with a chair. Each committee of which was going to be a search committee for the chairman of medicine, pediatrics, surgery, OB, psychiatry, and family medicine. We had to get six chairs. They had to do national searches, because by then there was affirmative action and national searches. We wanted the best people that we could find. We had to advertise in the *New England Journal* and such by the first of August. So, July was a very busy month, putting together all of this paper work. It all went out and I said see you in September, I was gone for a month and soon after I got back George called me in and says Susan and I are separating and I am finished, worn-out, beat. We met our goal. The legislature approved the conversion, I am going to resign. I think at the same time, that night he told Fred Anderson. (Within a day or two he told Fred) Shortly thereafter, he discussed it with Edna Brigham and some of the others. It so happened that, at that time, there was one of these site visits that I was talking about from a number of people looking at our educational program. People from the LCME and AAMC, just happened to be in town the day that George announced his resignation.

EB: Effective when?

TS: It was going to be effective almost immediately, in late September. He actually left a couple days before I was appointed. I can look up when I was appointed. These people from the AAMC and LCME went down and talked to Max Milan and Max came and met with some of the senior faculty, who at that time, were all basic scientist, except for Merle Haber, who was a physician. Max met with them. The argument was that we don't have time to go and do a national search for a dean when we are doing a search for six chairman. You won't be able to get any chairmen to come and work for anybody "acting" and the whole thing will fall apart. So, Max called me in and Fred Anderson was there and said we would like you to serve as the dean.

Will you do that? I said of course I will, I want to see this school do it. They said we are going to go to the board of regents next week and ask them to suspend the rule on affirmative action, because if you are appointed only acting dean, the best advise we have is that you won't be able to hire chairs, and they won't want to come to work for an acting dean, because they won't know who they are coming to work for. So, we are going to ask the regents to suspend that rule and appoint you dean permanently. Of course, the dean serves at the pleasure of the regents and the presidents so in that sense there is no such thing as a permanent job. They met with the senior members of the faculty. The faculty voted unanimously to support me. I got a letter to that effect from,, I think Larry Schneider, who was chairman of anatomy. Dick Licata was no longer in that position. The faculty supported it and the regents approved, obviously with Fred Anderson and Louie Lombardi's support. That October 1977, I was appointed the dean and George left. It turned out ultimately that George went to Boston and married a former student of ours who was doing her medical school clerkship. Remember we were still a two-year school and students were still transferring. His wife, Shirley Holbrook, was a medical student at Tufts in Boston so George went there. They got married and Shirley went into pathology and became a pathologist on the faculty at the University of Alabama where George was. I am getting way ahead of myself, but ultimately they left Boston and went to Birmingham, Alabama, where the dean there had been an old friend of his.

EB: Is he still there?

TS: George is still there and works part-time at the VA.

EB: Are they still together?

TS: No, they are not. He had two children with Shirley and Shirley is now on the faculty I believe at University of Connecticut.

EB: During this time before you had your first juniors starting, by now you were actually up to forty students?

TS: Yes, forty-eight.

EB: You all ready had that many?

TS: Yes, I am quite sure. I can tell you when we actually did that just for completeness. We started with thirty-two, then we went to forty-four and then we went to forty-eight. We were at forty-eight the previous year in 1975. We stayed at forty-eight per year for the next fifteen years.

EB: How did you ever find places for those kids? It must have been close to impossible?

TS: Well, it was, but for the first couple of years we were able to capitalize on the expansion of other medical schools. There were schools that were expanding just like we were expanding and taking more students, so they were happy to get a few extra students to fill in the holes in their classes, if they had students who failed out. That became tougher and tougher. I think that we said this earlier, that Owen Peck did a very good job. He worked very hard at that for the first couple of years. Once the first couple of classes had succeeded, then those deans of students would call us and say can you send us another couple of students like the ones we have had.

EB: A few here and there, but still forty-eight is a lot to find places for.

TS: Yes, one of the paradoxes of this whole thing, that I have often mentioned to people is that here Nevada students were being spread around forty or more medical schools all over the country. Whereas students from other states were spending all their medical education within their own state, so the paradox was that we had more exposure nationally in the third and fourth year, than many other medical schools. Schools would say gosh, you have Nevadans all over the place.

Now, I am appointed dean and George has left. We then start another cycle by November of 1977, people are answering our ads for these chairs. The committees are going through the usual process of sorting through hundreds of applications. It is interesting how many applications we got because a new developing medical school is an attraction to lots of people. They say that they would like to get in on the ground floor and see what is going on.

EB: _____ has always been the attraction the sports, life style.

TS: We attracted people from back east. As it turned out we were then in the process of having the chairs of those committees meet with me regularly. Some of whom are also the chairs of our basic science departments. Then would meet with me and say this is where we are. So, finally, somewhere in January or February each one of them came and handed me their list of the top two or three. It was my job, after talking with Max Milan, to decide who I was going to invite out. We invited two or three of the top candidates in each of those six departments. From January until something like April (I can check the months) my wife Celia gave dinner after dinner and cocktail party after cocktail party. We had no host fund, there was no such thing as a host budget.

EB: Who paid their way?

TS: The school paid their way. We put that in when we built the budget. So, we had to have hotels and airline tickets and that sort of stuff. We had enough money to do all of that. I would meet with every one of them with the chairman of the committee or with the whole search committee. So, we went through that whole process and most of them came to my home. A lot of them would come, after a while it was impossible for us to do them all. Bud Baldwin was a very gracious host, Merle Haber. Alistair Cunningham was here, at the time, and he was the chair of one of the committees. Don Pickering was the chair of one committee and Paul Miller. Fred Anderson wasn't the chair of a committee, but he was gracious as a host.

EB: I'll need that.

TS: I will get the names of the chairs for the search committees. I will also give you the chairs of the departments as well. So, that is what we did most of that spring '78. Owen essentially stopped worrying about trying to transfer because we were going to have to keep that class that June. As it turned out we didn't keep the whole class. There were several students who decided to transfer. They were anxious, they didn't want to be what they thought were guinea pigs to a new school. In fact under the board of regents rules, you can't change the rules in mid-stream. If you enter a school under a certain catalog you are suppose to be able to finish under that catalog. So, there were a number of students who said I came when this was a two year school and I expected to be transferred into a "high powered" university someplace and I am going to leave. We said well that is your prerogative. As it turned out that year out of forty-eight we might have kept thirty-six or thirty-eight who ultimately graduated, our first M.D.s and the other ten or twelve transferred out.

Be that as it may, during this process, finally, we got down to the final ones and I can recall sitting at this desk at that telephone, calling them on the phone and inviting them to come out. Telling them that they were our first choice. They all came a second time and then it was my job to negotiate salaries. Something that was kind of interesting was their use to be a law on the books that no one in the government or at the university could make more money than the governor. Well at that time, I think that the governor was making \$30,000 or \$40,000 and that was ludicrous to think that we could get a chairman of medicine for that kind of money. So, actually, part of the conversion approval by the legislature was to remove that restriction for the

medical school. That we fought for. We said don't authorize the conversion of the school and then hamstringing us and not allow us to get the best people we can find. I think that the chairman of medicine and surgery when we did finally get them came in at twice the salary the governor was making, which, of course, the papers loved to pick up on.

EB: Another nail in the coffin.

TS: Yes, are these faculty so important or more important than our governor. Frankly, many of the other university chairs and faculty in other departments, many of whom were opposed to the medical school, consistently threw up the argument, including Joe Crowley, who at that time was the chairman of the university faculty senate and he was in the political science department, he was not supportive of the school. He championed the university senate and faculty's opinion that if you give the pie to the medical school, the pie will be smaller and they will get smaller pieces. We kept arguing that the pie will only get bigger. Well, we were proven right. You don't cut up the same piece of pie, you expand it. Of course, we predicted that Nevada would grow. My wife often asks me how did you predict? I say Nixon predicted it. Nixon said he would get elected on his southern strategy and all he had to do was look at the way the population growths were growing from the late 1950's early 1960's and even the early 1970's the population growth was to the southwest and it didn't take a magician to say that Nevada was going to fall into that.

EB: Who would have known though?

TS: We predicted it and told them, by the turn of the century there would be a million people in Nevada. Well, now there is 1.4 million. At any rate, there was a lot of opposition, but what ultimately happened, was that the pie did get bigger. Also, the salary restrictions for all of the university were eventually taken off. As well as, for other state employees. So, there are many state employees now who do make more than the governor. So, in fact the medical school did have a positive ripple effect for others. Anyway, the salary ceiling was removed and I was then able to hire. By late spring all of whom agreed they would be here in July. I want you to take the job, you will be on the ground floor of a new medical school, but you have to be here to start this first group of students. With very few faculty. So, Ernie Mazzaferri accepted the job as chairman of medicine, Burt Dudding was chairman in pediatrics. Burt had been the chair at the University of Kansas. Ernie had been the acting chair at Ohio State, and ultimately he went back to Ohio State where he is still chair of medicine. Bob Martin in family medicine from down in California.

Ira Pauly from University of Oregon in psychiatry. We had Merle Haber in pathology here. We got Bob Fulton from West Virginia in surgery. He didn't stay very long and ultimately was replaced the next year by Ralph DePalma who then went on to become chairman at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. We were not successful in getting an outside chairman in OB because we had made the agreement with the people in Las Vegas that they take our students in their residency program. They would then run their own residency and take care of our students. So, we appointed two of them as co-chairs at least for the first couple of years and then subsequently George Furman was made chairman. Initially we started with George Roges and Bill Wickstead who agreed to run the program down there.

EB: In pediatrics?

TS: In pediatrics was Burt Dudding. I will give you all of those names. They all agreed and they all showed up in late June early July. I think that as soon as they agreed it was around Easter time of 1978. We now had a whole bunch of sophomores getting ready to start their junior year. I brought them all out again and we spent several days sitting up in the same conference room where we had done the negotiating for the original curriculum six years earlier. We sat around the table and they put together the curriculum and what they were comfortable doing. I sat there, argued with them, talked and agreed. We were ready to start our first class of juniors in the summer of 1978. They became our first doctors in June of 1980. I will get the exact number later, but roughly thirty-six or so and that became our first M.D. degrees. They were the class of 1980. Once the chairs showed up really I sort of took a big sigh of relief.

EB: All of this time you are the dean of the medical school?

TS: Yes. Now, what we were working on was trying to get faculty. We have students, so Ernie, Burt, Bob Martin, Bob Fulton and Ira Pauly are now out recruiting their faculty. But, initially they got a lot of cooperation from a number of the physicians in town. Ira Pauly initially had the easiest of it because he did have a department of behavioral science and psychiatry which had all ready been here. So, there was Paul Miller, Bud Baldwin, and John Altrocchi. There were a number who could help him get started in psychiatry.

EB: Some of these people had their own private practice as well right?

TS: Yes, they did and Burt Dudding got a lot of help out of Pickering, Missal and that group who said we will take the students in the nursery at Washoe. Ernie did get a lot of help. Ernie also had a couple of internist who worked at the VA as did Bob Fulton. Remember medicine and surgery really focused at the VA, initially. We had the OB in Las Vegas, so we didn't have to worry too much about having the physicians who ran that residency and the residents themselves helping teach. In the meantime, they are all out searching for full-time faculty. They weren't given a lot of money. I had a very limited budget. It was my job to divide up the money. So, I sat down with them all in a room and said this is all we have. You are going to have to make it due as best as you can and get as much help as you can from the VA and Reno physicians. Simultaneously they all had to start putting together proposals for residencies, because we said that we would start residencies the following year. They all had to start putting together their proposals. Once you have a medical school approved by the LCME you also have to have residencies approved by the ACGME or the LCGME (Liaison Committee for Graduate Medical Education). So, the chairs arrive on the scene and started teaching students. Also they have to start putting residencies together. Then it began to get hot and heavy because we wanted to get as much help as we could from Washoe and the resistance began to appear at Washoe Medical Center. In the meantime, Max Milan got fired. So, the president that I had become quite friendly with and who was very supportive and very helpful to me is now gone and there is a period where Jim Anderson is the acting president again and ultimately Joe Crowley is appointed.

EB: He was really not supportive.

TS: Not initially. Now, I have to say he certainly came around. As the president he felt that he needed to be supportive and he was very helpful and supportive of me. Over the next year and one half until I resigned there were meetings upon meetings of the medical staff at Washoe. The Washoe County Medical Society had several meetings in which they put out a survey asking the physicians whether they supported the school and there were numbers of them that voted the school should be closed. Wow, we were just getting started and there were people saying the school should be closed. I had gone to a number of meetings, public and private, where in private I was told that we had support, that we will be behind you yes, we will help you get the residencies started, yes, we will try to get some money and help the residents work at the clinic.

Then when the public meetings occurred with the Board of Trustees of Washoe and some of the County and State Medical Society meetings, all of the sudden the support wasn't there.

EB: What were the public reasons for saying the school should close?

TS: It was going to cost too much.

EB: The money.

TS: Money. There aren't going to be enough patients. You need free patients. You need money from the county hospital and more money from the state in order to pay residents salaries, you don't have it. You need money to hire more faculty. You can't ask people in private practice to devote their time to teaching medical students