

# MIDDLETON MEDICAL LIBRARY



Fig. 1. Middleton Medical Library c. 1970. It is 136 by 82 feet, sheathed in brick on the east and west faces, and concrete panels on the north and south sides, with windows on the north and south sides. [Series 9/4, Middleton Library, jf-85]

*Built in 1965 to house the medical schools growing and rootless library, the Middleton medical library is named for William Shainline Middleton, the dean of the medical school from 1935 to 1955.*

Like many of the specialized libraries at the University, the medical library had a precarious and nomadic history. This journey roughly parallels the history of the medical school itself. Begun by Drs. Bardeen and Erlanger, who collected current periodicals and journals, and donated texts and journals of their own, the library of medical works was housed variously in the old Olin house on Langdon Street, in the north stacks of the Historical Society Library, in the Service memorial building, and other opportunistic locations. The collection continued to grow throughout these wanderings. From 1930 onwards it was housed in the basement and first floor of the Service Memorial Institute. Since no state appropriations were ever made specifically to support a medical library, the collection grew at the whim of private donors. Chief among these were Dr. William Snow Miller, whose large and significant collection was purchased by the regents after his death in 1940. The constant support of the ad-hoc collecting and operating of the "library" by Dr. Paul F. Clark and his wife, by Dr. W. S. Middleton, and others, made the collection a valuable resource to the medical school, in spite of its haphazard development.<sup>1</sup>

In the late 1950s, the alumni of the medical school organized a fund drive to build a medical library. By the end of 1959, the alumni group had collected \$189,000 for the project, in a fund which had been begun by a small donation to the school during the administration of dean Middleton, and the regents had approved a site on the "west side of Randall Avenue, north of the nurses dorm". A few weeks later the University planning commission reversed themselves and that site was given to the new genetics building, and the site of the medical library was left undecided for a time. By mid-1960

it was clear that because of rising building costs and lagging fund-raising, that outside money would be needed. In January 1961, the regents approved a new site, the southeast corner of Linden Drive and Randall Avenue extended. The regents were told that the alumni had collected about \$500,000. The department of planning and construction estimated (and the state approved) the cost of the project at \$550,000, and recommended that it be built in two stages. The planning for the library was considerably complicated by the fact that the University was planning an entirely new hospital structure, and was unsure of where it was to be built.<sup>2</sup>

In January 1962 the regents approved the preliminary plans for the medical library. These plans were for the first unit of the library, with the second unit to be built as more funds became available. In April 1963 in hope that more money would become available, the state building commission authorized the project to cost as much as \$1.1 million. Planning went on through 1963 and early 1964, with the building committee and architects Iverson, Kenney and Graven.<sup>3</sup>

When the additional funds had been raised, the preliminary plans of the complete project were presented to the regents and approved in October 1964. The estimated cost was \$1.1 million, to be comprised of \$800,000 in gifts, and \$300,000 in state funds. In February 1965 the regents approved the final plans without changes in funding or design.<sup>4</sup>

Construction contracts were awarded for the medical library on April 9, 1965. The general contract went to J. H. Findorff of Madison for \$527,533. Total contracted costs were \$877,198. The contracts for the tunnel and plaza were let in November 1966 to Vogel Brothers of Madison for \$81,414. Ground-breaking took place on May 3, 1965, and with the cooperation of an open winter, the building was turned over to the University for use on April 15, 1966. The tunnel and plaza were finished in the spring of 1967.<sup>5</sup>

The building is a basement and three floors of reinforced concrete. There are book stacks on all levels; checkout area, offices, reading rooms, reference and conference rooms are scattered on levels one through three. The intended expansion space was to the east, toward the Bradley memorial. This expansion has not proved necessary, because of the book storage space in the basement of Bradley, accessible through a tunnel between the buildings.

The earliest records of the project mention the intention to name the building after Dr. William Shainline Middleton, one of the best loved personalities of the medical school. Dr. Middleton came to the University in 1912 as an assistant of Dr. Evans. He became dean of the medical school in 1935, he took a leave from the deanship to serve eight years as head of the Veteran's Administration. After his death, he was honored for his work there when, the U. S. Senate renamed Madison's V. A. hospital the William S. Middleton Memorial Veteran's Hospital. This is one of only six VA hospitals named for an individual. In 1963 Dr. Middleton at age 73, returned to the University as dean, where he served until 1974. Dr. Middleton died on September 9, 1975 at age 85, after serving the University for 63 years. The University had already put aside a long-standing (though not inviolate) tradition of not naming University buildings after living persons. In March 1967 the regents voted to name the Medical center library, the "William S. Middleton Medical Library".<sup>6</sup>

1) Paul F. Clark, *The University of Wisconsin Medical School*, pp. 156-159, University directories.

2) *Regent's Minutes*, October 24, 1959, January 6, 1961, December 8, 1961, ; *Capital Times*, January 23, 1959; Peterson to Culbertson, November 6, 1959, series 24/9/2 box 12.

3) *Regent's Minutes*, January 5, 1962, May 10, 1963.

4) *Regent's Minutes*, September 1964, October 1964, February 1966; Lorenz to State Building Commission, June 2, 1966, series 24/9/3 box 6.

5) *Regent's Minutes*, May 9, 1965 exhibit J; Buelow to Edsall, April 18, 1966, series 24/9/3 box 6; *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, February 1965, p. 13.

6) *Regents Minutes*, March 10, 1967; *The Capital Times*, September 1, 1976. Other individuals so honored include Franklin Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and Audie Murphy. The William Shainline Middleton biographical file in the University Archives.