“A hospital is exactly what the citizens of any community make it. So, now, the citizens of Akron and the Tri-County area must decide what kind of a health center they want Akron General Hospital to be.”

Akron General Long Range Plan 1964
A tinted postcard of Akron General Hospital in the 1950s explains in its caption that the hospital has capacity of 525 patients, as well as featuring “The latest in medical, surgical and obstetrical equipment to serve the Akron area.”

More than 350 people attended the inaugural Service League tea on January 24, 1956.

The School of Nursing 1957 graduating class.

Dr. Joseph S. Lichty (pictured with his wife) was the successor to Eva P. Craig, and served as the executive director of the hospital from 1957 to 1970.

This monthly listing of Women’s Board volunteers and volunteer hours details the month of December 1955.
The city’s apartment buildings in the downtown were undersized for the needs of a modern city. 20th century were deteriorating and seemed very little new construction in the downtown and older neighborhoods) were aging. There were signs of problems emerging during the same time through the research laboratories that developed alongside the big rubber plants and The University of Akron. Plentiful jobs were available for skilled and unskilled workers alike. Existing city neighborhoods grew, but suburbs like Kenmore, Barberton, Fairlawn and Ellet spread even more. The trucking industry, represented by carriers large (such as Roadway of Akron) and small took advantage of rapidly spreading interstate freeways and Akron’s place as a crossroads connecting the East to the Midwest, West and South. The city’s technology leadership emerged during the same time through the retail centers of the city, its downtown, might be shifting away to the suburbs as well. New shopping areas, featuring retail, restaurants, banking and other services appeared farther out in the suburbs where shopping was more convenient for a populace increasingly dependent on the automobile, but resistant to driving “all the way downtown.” New types of businesses, like fast food restaurants, drive-in theaters, drive-through banking and dry-cleaning, began to chip away at the drawing power of the downtown. At the same time the Federal government developed programs that encouraged urban renewal as a panacea for declining downtowns across the nation.

A Second Volunteer Organization
The hospital’s expansion plan of the 1950s reached its fruition with the reopening of Akron General Hospital in 1955. Along with capital expansion, there needed to be an increase in staffing and volunteering. Accordingly, the Women’s Board suggested to the Trustees’ Public Relations Committee that another volunteer auxiliary women’s group be formed. The idea was to create the Akron General Service League, which would take the story of the new hospital out into the community. The Public Relations Committee agreed that the new volunteer organization could fill another need in the newly-expanded hospital, and the chair of the Committee brought the idea to the Board of Trustees Executive Committee. Approval was given and the Women’s Board agreed to sponsor the new group. The Service League had its first general meeting in the form of a tea attended by 350 people held on January 24, 1956.

The Career of Eva P. Craig
A native Canadian, Eva P. Craig came to Akron in 1932 to serve as assistant director of nurses and instructor in the School of Nursing. Craig was not a person who liked to promote herself, but was a clear-thinking compassionate leader who was responsive to the needs of the present as well as a visionary who foresaw better things in the future for Peoples Hospital.

Just two months after Craig started her job at Peoples Hospital, the director of the hospital, R. A. Kepler, suffered a fatal heart attack and suddenly the hospital needed an acting director while a search for Kepler’s replacement took place. The first person the Board turned to was Craig, who had already impressed everyone associated with the hospital with her talent, efficiency and temperament. After just two months as acting director, she was appointed permanent Director of the Hospital. It was a decision that the Board of Trustees would never regret.

Eva P. Craig served as the administrative head of the hospital from 1932 through the Great Depression, World War II, and the post-war expansion. There were many distinct challenges to each of these eras of the hospital’s history, but she was always equal to the task. When the new Akron General Hospital opened in 1955 she was still in the position, remaining so for two years spanning the transition period of the greatly expanded operation. In 1957, Eva P. Craig finally retired, but her legacy of leadership remains vivid in the institutional memory of Akron General.

The nation, and Akron, Ohio, generally enjoyed a time of prosperity in the 1950s and early 1960s. The city’s rubber companies and related industries were busy making tires and other consumer products. American automobiles were selling briskly, and most of the original equipment and replacement tires were manufactured in the Rubber City. Many other industries also fed off the rise in consumerism that reflected an ever-growing middle class. The infrastructure and building stock (especially in the downtown and near downtown. The city’s technology leadership emerged during the same time through the research laboratories that developed alongside the big rubber plants and The University of Akron. Plentiful jobs were available for skilled and unskilled workers alike. Existing city neighborhoods grew, but suburbs like Kenmore, Barberton, Fairlawn and Ellet spread even more quickly due to the need for housing and the responsive unprecedented number of housing starts by developers.

But there were signs of problems emerging during the 1950s and early 1960s. The infrastructure and building stock (especially in the downtown and older neighborhoods) were aging. There was very little new construction in the downtown since the end of World War II and many downtown buildings built during the early 20th century were deteriorating and seemed undersized for the needs of a modern city. The city’s apartment buildings in the downtown and nearby neighborhoods went unrented as increasing numbers of people bought their own houses and moved outward from the city center. More and more workers, mostly the growing middle class, moved away from the city to the suburbs. There were signs that the retail center of the city, its downtown, might be shifting away to the suburbs as well. New shopping areas, featuring retail, restaurants, banking and other services appeared farther out in the suburbs where shopping was more convenient for a populace increasingly dependent on the automobile, but resistant to driving “all the way downtown.” New types of businesses, like fast food restaurants, drive-in theaters, drive-through banking and dry-cleaning, began to chip away at the drawing power of the downtown. At the same time the Federal government developed programs that encouraged urban renewal as a panacea for declining downtowns across the nation.

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Aki’s civic leaders in the postwar were drawn to urban renewal as a means of bringing business back to the downtown and clearing deteriorating inner-city neighborhoods. After a decade of planning in the face of continuing flight to the suburbs, Akron in the late 1950s began to implement the first phase of urban renewal, displacing remaining existing businesses and residents, then clearing whole areas of the downtown and near downtown.

The Grant-Washington Urban Renewal Area was an old German neighborhood of residences and small businesses just on the

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east side of the railroad tracks that separated the neighborhood from the downtown. Numerous buildings were demolished and streets realigned to connect with planned freeway access in a district mostly re-designated for development as a commercial area.

Another residential neighborhood slated for urban renewal was a small residential area between The University of Akron and East Exchange Street. The houses and streets were all removed entirely and replaced by Lee Jackson Field, devoted to university athletic fields as well as new science buildings. The entire area was developed as part of an effort to expand the campus of the university, a first step in attaining status as a state school. The University of Akron in the 1950s had been a municipal university since 1913, having begun its history as a small Universalist college just after the Civil War.

The downtown was profoundly changed by urban renewal projects that demolished whole blocks (including those between South Main and old South Howard Street, which was Akron's main thoroughfare in the 19th century). Except for a couple of blocks in the center of the downtown, the former Ohio & Erie Canal was submerged below grade as part of the city's combined storm sewer overflow system. There was outcry from some quarters regarding the loss of so many Akron historic landmarks as well as displacement of people and businesses, but the city plunged on with plans to modernize.

A later urban renewal project, the Opportunity Park area adjoining Akron General's neighborhood, was begun within the decade. Fortunately, Akron General Hospital was viewed by city leaders as an essential and positive element anchoring its area of the city. Anticipation of the opening of the greatly expanded hospital was great, and it cemented the important place of Akron General in the history of the community.

**Akron General Hospital officially opens in 1955**

The opening of Akron General Hospital in 1955 was another significant event in the city's dynamic history. More than 1,000 people attended the opening, which featured numerous speeches, dinners, and tours for visitors. For nearly two decades, it had become a public concern how few hospital beds there were in Akron given the size of its population, and Akron General's expansion of facilities was heralded as the most significant step taken since the dismal years of the Great Depression.

A special section celebrating the opening was included in the *Akron Beacon Journal* as front-page news in the community and region. The newspaper section not only reported on the ceremonies and activities surrounding the opening, but also described in detail the new facilities through special articles written by hospital administrators, trustees and doctors. Extensive use of photographs illustrated all the new buildings and facilities as well as conveying the history of Akron General from its founding as Peoples Hospital, covering the more than 40 years of service to the community. Also, the opening was covered extensively by Akron's WAKR Television Channel 49 (later it became Channel 23), which began broadcasting just two years earlier.

The new facilities heralded a new phase in the hospital's history of public service. First and foremost in the community's collective mind was the fact that Akron General nearly doubled patient capacity: from 280 beds in 1954 to 525 beds in 1955. This significantly improved on the original goal of providing 495 beds. The cost of the new construction and rehabilitation exceeded $5.5 million, which even several years earlier seemed unattainable. This was in contrast to the $108,759 cost of the original building in 1914.

Although the increases in number of beds and investment in the new facilities were impressive, perhaps the biggest long-term story would be the many new and enhanced capabilities made possible by the expansion. The new building housed 150 surgical beds; a dedicated psychiatric ward adding 20 new beds expressly for use by psychiatric patients; enlarged and improved maternity facilities including 13 additional beds; new state-of-the-art operating and delivery suites; enlarged and better-equipped laboratories; additional administrative offices; a new fully equipped expansive emergency suite; a 250-seat public auditorium for professional meetings and lectures; a bright, new airy solarium; a professionally-equipped and efficient new central services department; new fully furnished kitchens and dining rooms; a modern, new clinic designed specifically to treat outpatients; a larger snack shop; and a well-stocked new gift shop.
The School of Nursing published *The Echo*, a yearbook for nursing students, every year.

A nursing instructor illustrates artificial respiration to several nursing students studying first aid in the 1950s.

Four student nurses and their instructor in the nursing library. Left to right: Ann Oyston, Delores Tullar, Mrs. Diana Mascolo, Eileen McNeil, and Esther Moeller.

The hospital’s Women’s Board presented Eva P. Craig (far left) with an 1804 Meisser clock for her retirement in 1957. Mrs. Thomas Knowles is on the right and Mrs. T. C. Laughlin is in the center.

The new hospital provided a much more substantial gift shop.

Two nursing students aid a 23-year-old mother suffering from polio in 1957. Respiration was assisted by the use of a familiar machine (during the 1940s and 1950s polio epidemic) called an “Iron Lung.”
Nursing students and their instructor in 1961. The School of Nursing graduated 43 nurses in 1961, totalling 714 graduates since the school began in 1915. Doctors work at the microscope in this image included in the Teaching Programs section of the 1961 Annual Report.


This photograph of the hospital was from the 1963 Annual Report.

Pictured on the front cover of the 1965 Annual Report, this photograph was captioned: "A voluntary hospital serving Akron and vicinity since its founding as Peoples Hospital in 1914."
The hospital’s old building was remodeled at the same time. Improvements were made including: expanded nurseries; a new psychotherapy department; a complete, staffed social service department; an updated and modern purchasing department; a new biophysical laboratory; a much-enlarged electrocardiograph and basal metabolism suite; and an enlarged modern pharmacy.

There were other improvements to the hospital site, transforming the complex of buildings and services into a modern attractive campus. New parking lots were developed utilizing land acquired in the postwar. Akron General became the first general hospital in the area to have its own psychiatric ward. The X-ray department was substantially redone and now housed a 250,000-volt machine along with seven other X-ray machines in the suite. The new radioisotope laboratory (still under construction at the time of opening the new facilities, so the hospital was quickly added 47 new beds to the front of the 1914 building. The new Akron General Hospital was an impressive achievement, fulfilling the dreams of longtime Executive Director Eva Craig, veteran trustees, city leaders, hospital staff and the people of the city. Those who made it happen took a deep breath, savored the accomplishment, and then began crafting new plans for the hospital’s future.

### Akron General Hospital in the late 1950s and early 1960s

Akron General Hospital, despite recently completing an impressive expansion and rededicating itself, had to keep moving forward as life changed in the community during the late 1950s. The need for further expansion was apparent again by 1956, just a year after opening the new facilities, so the hospital quickly added 47 new beds to the front of the 1914 building. At the same time, there was need for more volunteers to supplement the hospital’s staff, leading the Women’s Board to organize the Service League, a second auxiliary volunteer organization.

Eva Craig retired as the head of the hospital in 1957, fulfilling her promise to retire once the major postwar expansion was completed.
One of the foundational leaders of the hospital’s earliest era, Craig’s illustrious career spanned 25 years, from 1932 to 1957. She was succeeded by Joseph S. Lichty, MD.

In the late 1950s Akron General was able to add 57 new beds and 11 beds in Psychiatry, which illustrated the immediate success of the new psychiatry department. Community naysayers in the early 1950s had criticized the development of a psychiatry unit, believing that “regular” patients would not wish to be housed in the same building as psychiatric patients. But no such reluctance was ever expressed once the hospital opened the department. Other achievements of the 1950s included the creation of a personnel department as well as more substantial improvements to the retirement funds of employees. More adjacent property was acquired for anticipated expansion and additional parking.

The Tri-County Hospital Survey, initiated and led by Akron General, took stock of the available beds in the county’s hospitals, and the late 1950s study revealed that there still were not enough beds, projecting that population growth would make Akron’s deficit in hospital care even larger (projected to reach 350 beds by 1965). The result of the study was that Akron General’s leadership again began to contemplate expansion as the 1950s ended. While the board and administration developed new plans, the hospital implemented other improvements in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Between 1958 and 1960, a new research building (which was commonly referred to as the south extension) and a service building were constructed on the Akron General campus. These projects were made possible in part by a $30,000 grant from the Federal Government as well as $45,000 contributed by the Women’s Board. The remainder of the total costs of improvements, $560,000, was funded by the hospital without outside help. The new research building was another key to the future. Once the building was complete, the hospital took a big step forward in basic and clinical research. New procedures and knowledge resulted from research in the first year, including: new data revealing the effects of chest injuries on the heart; advances in obstetrics and gynecology; a new method of bone grafting in orthopedics; and an important study of the circulation of bone.

Another project of the late 1950s was the remodeling and refurnishing of First West at a cost of $45,000, completely funded by donations. Even though several new parking lots were built during the 1955 expansion, additional parking was constructed in 1958-59. Board President H. W. Slabaugh announced in his annual report of 1959:

“...on the medical front, upon the recommendation of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals and to establish the closest possible liaison between the Trustees and the Medical Staff, a Joint conference committee composed of four trustees and four members of the Medical Staff was organized. This Committee has held several meetings, and is working upon numerous Hospital problems, the solution of which demands the closest cooperation and understanding between the lay board and the doctors.”

A new pharmacy department was completed in 1961, and an existing space was repurposed to become the intensive care unit in 1962.

The 1960 Annual Report related that television service was now an option available in all patient rooms (wired to antennas on the roof of the hospital). Akron General’s workforce rose to 1,000 for the first time in its history. President Slabaugh reported that 17 retired employees were now receiving benefits. Nearly half of the School of Nursing’s 42 graduates (the largest graduating class to date) were hired by the hospital. There were 9 students enrolled in the School of Technology and 15 students studying in the School of X-ray Technology (open since 1956). The hospital’s occupancy rate in 1960 was 95.9 percent, the highest in its history, and there was a waiting list. The emergency room treated 12,658 patients and there were 13,041 visits to the outpatient clinics – these were also unprecedented numbers.

Akron General in 1961 was reaccredited for a new three-year period and the American Medical Association approved the internship and residency programs (including a new residency in Urology, making a total of eight residencies). The School of Nursing was re-accredited through 1966. The Board of Trustees also established the 50th Anniversary Development Fund (looking forward to 1964,
A 1964 perspective drawing made it easier to see the existing and proposed facilities that comprised the first phase of the hospital’s capital improvements.

The hospital’s record room became bigger and more complex before electronic records began to dominate.

Medical students listen attentively to a speaker in 1966.

A 1964 booklet that featured detailed floor plans and charts of square footage.

Students in the School of Medical Technology rotated through the hospital’s laboratories as well as working through 190 hours of lectures and testing in their field. This laboratory photograph was taken in 1964.

A 1964 perspective drawing made it easier to see the existing and proposed facilities that comprised the first phase of the hospital’s capital improvements.

A more detailed plan of the proposed new wing was presented in a 1964 booklet that featured detailed floor plans and charts of square footage.
Taken in the mid-1960s, this image includes past presidents of the Women’s Board and Service League. Front row, left to right: Mrs. T C. Laughlin (WB, 1957-59); Mrs. Helen Wolle (1st WB president, 1932-35); Mrs. William Palmer (WB, 1963-65); Herman Hochswender (SL, 1962-64); Mrs. Dudley Maxon (WB, 1951-63); Mrs. George Rooney (WB, 1961-63). Second row, left to right: Mrs. Thomas Knowles (WB, 1955-57); Mrs. George Leonard (WB, 1947-49); Mrs. Penfield Seiberling (WB, 1935-37); Miss Barbara Kuhlke (WB, 1959-61); Mrs. Frank Ake (WB, 1959-61); Mrs. Clarence McCready (SL, 1956); Mrs. George Hayes (SL, 1959-60); and Mrs. George Efflord (SL, 1957).

The record room faced space problems by 1966. Shelves were nearly full and space was at a premium.

Women’s Board volunteers fold bedding in the laundry in 1966.

Data processing equipment and these once familiar large-format printouts were part of the hospital’s daily operations in 1966.

A hospital employee irons clothing in the laundry department of Akron General in 1966.
the hospital’s golden anniversary) and also set aside 2.5 percent of general earnings for the needed expansion of the hospital as well as new equipment purchases. The Medical Staff and Board of Trustees continued to be concerned that communication between the two had continued to erode to a point of almost no contact even with the existence of the Joint Committee. Both Board and Staff made a renewed recommitment to strengthen this necessary working relationship. Both groups began sending representatives to each other’s regular meetings.

The hospital’s first payroll of 1963 (covering 1,203 employees) was prepared by the use of new electronic data processing equipment, a boon to administration of an ever more complex institution. The addition of electronic computer equipment in the laboratories greatly speeded up the process of analyzing tissue and blood samples. Automation, in the future, would become perhaps the biggest change and improvement in hospital operations as well as in the daily lives of Americans.

While the hospital began serious discussion of further expansion in the early 1960s, a problem regarding rubber workers and Blue Cross emerged. The crisis began in 1964 when Akron’s rubber companies notified the hospital that the companies would not pledge funds to any new hospital expansion until a conflict with Blue Cross was settled. The problem stemmed from the fact that the United Rubber Workers (URW) contract with the rubber companies stipulated full health coverage for the workers, but Blue Cross was paying only a percentage of the costs.

Another milestone was reached in 1964 when Akron General Hospital celebrated its 50th anniversary. The slogan for the year (featured on a large sign on Wabash) was “Sharing in Community Care, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow – 50 Years.” Also, the slogan was featured on the hospital’s logo for the next several years. The anniversary was commemorated with a daylong convocation at Kolbe Hall on the campus of The University of Akron. The convocation hosted leaders in hospital affairs from all over the nation. Following the convocation a large banquet at the Sheraton Hotel was attended by 400 guests. The Women’s Board celebrated the hospital’s half-century of success by naming their annual spring ball the “Golden Anniversary Ball.” The General Hospital Board of Trustees, at the 50th Annual Meeting, endorsed a new long-range plan and capital campaign to be launched immediately.

Education as a key to Medical Staffing

The hospital by the mid-1960s looked to solve the increasing problem of medical staff shortages. Although there had previously been sufficient interns and residents to cover Akron General’s needs, in the early years of the 1960s numbers had begun to decline.

The Board of Trustees Executive Committee appointed a Long-Range Education Planning Committee to examine the problem and promote a more robust medical education program. At first, the Committee looked at short-term solutions, but finally decided that a carefully considered comprehensive long-term plan would improve the situation.

As Ludel Sauvageot reported in her hospital history, the Committee successfully drafted a plan that included the following goals:

1. To be a teaching hospital of the highest order, conducting programs in Graduate Medical Education . . . based on [standards] approved by the Council of Medical Education of the American Medical Association.

2. To have a full-time director of Medical Education to coordinate teaching programs.

3. Make clinical facilities available whenever appropriate to educational institutions’ programs.

4. Develop and maintain outpatient facilities in accordance with total health needs of the Akron area.”

The Board of Trustees adopted the plan and a gradual implementation began. The educational investment of Akron General would be rewarded by the successes of the next few decades.
Akron in the late 1960s and early 1970s

Akron's ambitious urban renewal plan reached the end of its clearance phase as the decade of the 1960s ended. A new construction phase began that would literally change the face of downtown and near downtown (including Akron General’s neighborhood) by the early 1970s. Local and regional citizens groups like Citizens for Progress and the Area Development Committee were organized to concentrate on providing civic leadership and promoting growth and development of the city. The two organizations later merged to become the Area Progress Board, which provided civic leadership as the building phase began.

The Grant-Washington area just south of The University of Akron was the site of a new downtown central post office, a Holiday Inn, a large luxury automobile dealership and many other new commercial structures. The center of the downtown was reconfigured into the multi-million dollar Cascade Plaza, a multilevel parking deck covering over the old Ohio & Erie Canal. The parking deck was topped by an elevated landscaped plaza decorated with benches and tables, a water sculpture, and a combined stage and volleyball court for warm weather performances that doubled as an ice-skating rink (complete with a rental skate concession) in the winter. The new plaza retained the landmark First National Tower (today named the FirstMerit Tower) and was sprinkled with new high-rise office towers as well as a new downtown hotel. The new development and new buildings in the areas north of the plaza replaced whole blocks between South Main Street and old South Howard Street (in fact, Howard Street was wiped off of the map except where it entered the valley on the north side of the downtown).

The neighborhood adjoining Akron General Hospital was also partially razed and redeveloped as Opportunity Park, a new mixed use area with commercial, retail and housing coexisting. Akron also built in Opportunity Park the Recycle Energy Plant, which burned trash to produce steam for the downtown.

Nationally in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Americans were concerned and confronted with some societal challenges that had built up for years as well as industrial changes that were just beginning to appear – both affected northeast Ohio and Akron in the 1970s.

By 1970, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, the Generation Gap and other areas of conflict began to profoundly affect American life, especially in larger cities like Akron. The city, in response to incidents of racial conflict in the late 1960s, began to pay attention to renovating older urban neighborhoods and neighborhood business centers, while adding parks and community centers in response to citizens' complaints about deteriorating buildings, infrastructure and lack of other community facilities. Inner city neighborhoods became areas where new housing programs, often funded by federal program monies, were blended into the existing neighborhood.

The 1970s were the beginning of the “Rustbelt” years for northern cities like Youngstown, Toledo, Cleveland and Akron. Akron’s rubber industries began to show signs of decline in the early 1970s. Foreign competition and new products began to pressure even the “Big Four” rubber companies with headquarters in the city (BFGoodrich, Goodyear, Firestone and General). Severe economic troubles were on the horizon for the next few decades.

Akron General Hospital in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

A new era was foretold by the hospital’s launch of its long-range plan in 1964. The preamble of the 50th Anniversary Long-Range Plan stated in part:

"Akron General is proud of its 50 years of health protection it has provided for the area it serves. Now, as it stands on the threshold of its second half century, it must consider the future demands of an ever growing population. To meet these demands, Akron General is about to embark on the first phase of an expansion program that will cost $7,839,000. Being a non-profit institution General has no other choice to turn to citizens of the area for assistance in this huge task of preparing for the future. A capital funds campaign for $3,000,000 of the over-all total has been launched with the approval of the United Foundation of Summit County and the plans for the expansion have been sanctioned by the Hospital Planning Committee of Citizens for Progress."

Most of the cost of the plan’s first phase, a capital investment of $3 million, was to be raised from contributions by industry, business, and individuals in the area (Akron, Summit County,
A nurse carries a tray of medications in 1967.

Visitors lounged in Akron General’s spacious lobby in 1969.

The Women’s Board Hospitality Cart brought snacks, magazines, postage stamps, and other amenities around to patients daily.

Food Service was a big operation in the hospital in 1967.
The Akron General Hospital Board of Trustees at the annual meeting of the Board in 1969.

The expanded and renovated pharmacy, in 1969, provided for more work areas and storage.

The Credit and Cashiers Office was a busy place in 1969.

A technician positions a patient for an X-ray in 1969.

A medical staff member in 1970.

By 1972 the hospital was renewing its commitment to medical education.


and portions of Medina and Portage counties). The remainder came from government funds, wills, estates, bequests and gifts, together with interest and funded depreciation. The expansion would create "140 new medical and surgical beds, 20 obstetrical beds and 34 new psychiatric beds [as well as] additional new surgical, obstetrical, laboratory, emergency, radiology and food services facilities." Once the first phase was completed Akron General's planned capacity would be 648 beds. The plot plan for new expansion included a "nine-story wing, elevator transportation tower, a three-story multi-purpose building and a new and expanded emergency section." The four new buildings’ "front-faces" would be toward Wabash Avenue, and installation of parking lots carefully located to serve each building entrance.

Besides the capital expansion, a new expansion plan for Akron General Hospital Medical Education was another important facet of the new Long-Range Plan the Board of Trustees announced in 1964. The Board formed a Committee on Medical Education, whose goals included making Akron General a first-rate teaching hospital and hiring a full-time director of medical education. These new educational efforts were heartily supported by the Medical Staff as well as the full-time chiefs of major services and subspecialties. Two other goals emerged from the Medical Education Committee: to make clinical facilities available for educational programs and to develop outpatient facilities that would provide for more health needs of the community. The committee's goals would all be achieved in the 1970s.

The fundraising campaign was a tremendous success. By May, 1965 pledges exceeded the $3 million campaign goal. Notable were two substantial contributions: $500,000 pledged by the Women's Board and $300,000 by the Medical Staff. Construction drawings were begun, and as these final plans developed there were only small changes in the physical facilities of the hospital for the next few years, including remodeling of the pulmonary function laboratory in 1966.

Construction of the first phase of expansion began in 1967. The 1964 estimate of $7,839,000 in three years had increased to $15 million. A federal grant of $571,000 helped to make up the difference, but the hospital needed to borrow $7 million from local banks to fully fund all of the construction. The federal grant money was obtained because of the hospital's cooperative agreement with the Portage Path Community Health Center to provide adult in-patient beds at Akron General (as part of the hospital's expansion) for Portage Path Center patients. The following year the government raised the federal grant by nearly $180,000.

Akron General opened a new dialysis unit in 1969, and construction of the "100 building" began. The 100 building, fronting on Coddington Street (although the hospital retained 400 Wabash Avenue as its address), became the new front entrance to the hospital. New facilities in the building included: a spacious lobby; patient rooms; a pharmacy; kitchens; an emergency room (with more treatment rooms); admitting, credit and cashier offices; and a gift and snack shop. The new building was partly funded by the largest amount of employee donations ever received up until that point: $69,000.

There was a 65-day strike in 1969 by hourly hospital workers wishing to force an election to decide whether to be represented in collective bargaining by the existing Employees Association or to join the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME District Council No. 11). The strike lingered until an election was held in October. Akron General's employees voted to remain with the Employees Association and soon after a new three-year contract was successfully negotiated.

The 100 building was completed in 1970. Ludel Sauvageot reported the following in her earlier history of the hospital: "Occupation of the . . . building was gradual and accomplished with surprisingly little confusion. The new lobby, with the entrance on Coddington Street, was larger than the old one on Wabash Avenue, and it was more pleasant for visitors and for employees working in the area. Within a short while everyone [found] the new locations of the Petite Bazaar, snack shop, the credit and cashier department and various offices which had changed locations. . . . Throughout the building everything was different and better."

Between the beginning of expansion in 1967 and 1970 there were few changes in the levels or nature of services provided by Akron General. Instead, the real story was the fact that at no
time were there any important disruptions of service despite the challenges of buildings and departments under construction and the hospital's brief labor interruption. Even the shifting of whole departments and offices from one building to another did not cause any inconveniences affecting the quality of service.

Dr. Lichty, executive director since 1957, retired in 1970 and was succeeded by James M. Reynolds, who had served previously as personnel director (1957-1964), and then assistant director (1964-1970). Dr. Harvey M. Friedman was appointed chairman of the department of medicine and other appointments included: Dr. Douglas M. Evans, chairman of the department of surgery; Dr. William A. Cook, chairman of department of obstetrics and gynecology; Dr. Buel S. Smith, chairman of orthopedics; Dr. John P. Schlemmer, program director of the department of family practice; Dr. C. C. Roussi, chairman of the department of emergency medicine; Dr. John C. Johns, director of medical education; and Dr. Sol M. Levin, chairman of the department of psychiatry.

Phase One of the expansion construction lagged behind its scheduled completion date of October 1970, resulting in a new completion date in mid-year 1971. Departments (a total of 15 were moved) and offices were continually moving into new quarters in 1970 and 1971, but with minimal service disruption. The moving process was coordinated with the hospital's low occupancy periods to minimize difficulties. In other construction, the remodeling of the Second West patient floor into a coronary care unit was begun as well as the rehabilitation of a former single-family residence on Coddington Street for the West Side Family Practice Center. The Family Practice residency was approved in 1970, and the endoscopy room was remodeled the same year.

The hospital was renamed Akron General Medical Center in 1971. The name change reflected that the institution was no longer merely a hospital. The new commitment was to community health, as well as prevention and treatment.

New offices for hospital-based physicians were provided in 1971 by remodeling space in the 1500 building. Remodeling for the Marion S. Richardson Coronary Care Center, the result of an immense effort by the cardiologists who would practice there, was completed and the center opened. The Coronary Care Center was almost instantly filled with patients. The hospital's new facilities may have provided a positive effect on employee morale, since the lowest personnel turnover rate since 1958 was recorded. The total number of employees reached 1,464 in 1971.

The annual financial report of 1971 revealed that the hospital suffered its first annual financial deficit ($110,000) in years due to unanticipated fluctuations of occupancy and the cost of opening substantial new facilities. The following year, Akron General was able to earn a net income of $656,000 after the brief dip of the year before. The recovery was the result of the newly-completed facilities greatly improving the hospital's levels of service and increasing numbers of patients.

The Committee on Medical Education formed in the mid-1960s by the Board of Trustees was beginning to achieve its goals by 1972. Dr. Harvey Friedman, chairman of the department of medicine, was remembered by Dr. George Litman, who stated:

“Harvey's goal was to have a really good community hospital with great education . . . and they [area hospitals] were then starting to look at developing a medical school up here [in northeast Ohio] . . . I wanted to be in a community hospital where we had residents and interns, where we could conduct clinical research . . . and where we could take care of patients while educating future physicians.”

When Dr. Litman first visited Akron General he noted that the hospital:

“...made a commitment that it was going to have full time educators and specialists. Harvey Friedman was the first one, then he recruited a renal guy, a pulmonary guy, a diabetes guy . . . and then me. In Cardiology we were part of those important clinical trials and heart failure trials. I think Akron General was rather early in the trend to have community hospitals involved in education.”

The 1700 building was remodeled, and another existing space was rehabilitated for the Hemodialysis Unit in 1972. The hospital's Board of Trustees approved a formal oncology program in 1972, a decision that would be extremely important in the decades to come. The home-like environment, specially-trained personnel and well-stocked library were already evidence of the hospital's emerging leadership in the field.
Akron General’s radiology department rapidly increased its volume in 1972.

The Women’s Board continued to be an important part of the hospital’s workforce in 1973.

The scope of Food Service is evident from the size of the food preparation equipment in 1972.

Students and teacher work at microscopes in the School of Exfoliative Cytology in 1973.

This photograph of the cardiac catheterization laboratory is from the hospital’s Annual Report of 1973.
In 1973, the new emergency medicine department became the first so-designated in the nation. Construction began the same year on the hospital's first parking deck, which would add 460 parking spaces to the hospital's campus. Also, the Akron General Development Foundation was created and incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in April 1973. The Foundation was a relatively new idea nationally that caught the attention of the forward-looking Trustees’ Committee on Medical Education. The original idea of the Foundation was to raise funds for education and research, but the scope of work broadened to fund-raising in general. As a non-profit, the Akron General Development Foundation was governed by its own Board of Trustees composed originally of eight members: Willard Bear; William Dorner; Edward Kusel; John Feudner, Jr.; Vernon Owen, Jr.; James Reynolds; Buel Smith, MD; and William T. Walker. The purposes of the Foundation were defined as:

1. Engage in activities of charitable, scientific and educational activities.
2. Exclusively benefit and carry out the purposes of Akron General Medical Center (AGMC).
3. To operate under the control of AGMC.
4. To help maintain, develop and extend the services of AGMC.
5. To solicit and receive gifts, grant support for the purchase, lease or otherwise, property, real or personal for AGMC.
6. To make contributions, grants and gifts to or for the benefit of AGMC.
7. To hold property, to invest and re-invest and to pay the income and principal for the benefit of AGMC.

Staffed with professionally-trained people, the Foundation eased the pressure of day-to-day fundraising as well as attracting tax deductible gifts and bequests.

Thomas L. “Tim” Stover, MD, MBA, who later became president and chief executive officer of Akron General, came to Akron to serve his three-year residency at Akron City Hospital in 1973. He remembered the historical connection between Akron and the people of West Virginia:

“When I got here, I realized how many docs were already here and in practice from West Virginia, because of the connection between Akron and West Virginia. Thousands of people from the hills of West Virginia came to Akron to work in the rubber factories [beginning in World War I] and made Akron their home. So I knew there was a connection.”

Dr. Stover brought another concept with him that was a legacy of growing up in West Virginia and being educated at the University of West Virginia – the concept of prevention and wellness in healthcare. Physicians from West Virginia were trained to take health care to where the people were, and in that state the people were not largely concentrated in urban areas, but were scattered throughout the mountains and rural areas. Prevention and wellness were concepts that would play a major role in Akron General’s future.

Between 1955 and 1973, Akron General Hospital had become Akron General Medical Center, a dynamically-changed institution considered by the residents of Akron and its civic leadership to be a foundational part of the community. The hospital began to develop another master plan for the future in 1973. The plan, to be launched in 1974 (the hospital’s 60th anniversary), would provide the impetus for changes that would bring the hospital to the brink of a new century. In the next few decades, more expansion and a new vision would transform the meaning of community healthcare once again.