

**June 29, 2021**

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## **Wigton Heritage Center dedication event June 29**

*Facility will highlight med center's unique history*

On June 29, the University of Nebraska Medical Center will celebrate the opening of a new facility designed to memorialize the med center's unique history, and also serve as a campus welcome center.

The dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Wigton Heritage Center will begin at 11 a.m. CDT and be available online at [unmc.edu](http://unmc.edu).

The multi-level, 13,000-square-foot facility will include gallery and digital exhibit space and allow the Leon S. McGoogan Health Sciences Library staff to showcase previously hidden, prized collections to the public.

"The Wigton Heritage Center serves as a place of welcome and a catalyst for understanding, experiencing and appreciating UNMC's history and the Nebraska health professionals who have transformed lives, now celebrating 150 years since the founding of the first Nebraska medical college," said UNMC Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold, MD. "We are grateful to Dr. Bob Wigton and all of the donors who helped us create this transformational space."

Leadership gifts for the \$8 million building addition were provided by Robert S. Wigton, MD, and the Leland J. and Dorothy H. Olson Charitable Foundation, along with other private gifts supporting exhibits within the Wigton Heritage Center. Funding also was provided by the Nebraska Legislature through LB 957 for infrastructure upgrades to the adjoining Wittson Hall.

UNMC's unofficial campus historian, Dr. Wigton is a 1969 alumnus of the College of Medicine, professor of internal medicine and served in several key administrative areas, including associate dean for graduate medical education for nearly 40 years. The Wigton legacy spans three generations with several physicians within the family serving on the faculty of UNMC.

Gifts also were committed by the Leland J. and Dorothy H. Olson Charitable Foundation. The Olsons, both deceased, were University of Nebraska alumni and major contributors to UNMC for a variety of women's health and university initiatives. Dr. Leland Olson, a respected obstetrician and gynecologist in Omaha, was a volunteer UNMC physician faculty member and mentored medical interns in his practice. Three generations of the Olson family have graduated from the UNMC College of Medicine.

"We are grateful to our donors and thrilled to showcase UNMC's impactful story to our community, as well as the many visitors who come to campus," said Emily McElroy, dean of the McGoogan Library.

The Wigton Heritage Center will tell UNMC's story through gallery and digital exhibit space; showcase the McGoogan Library's vast special collections, artifacts, archives and rare books;

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and expose University Hospital's historic façade and iconic columns within a planned atrium that will serve as a welcoming space for alumni, visitors, new and prospective students, and others. A Dunkin Donuts will open within the space at the end of June.

On three floors of the Wigton Heritage Center, visitors may view 11 exhibits featuring images and artifacts from the McGoogan's Special Collections and Archives, UNMC College of Nursing, UNMC College of Dentistry and cultural institutions across the state. Three additional exhibits will open in November 2021. Visitors also can view 13 interactive displays throughout the Wigton Heritage Center by viewing campus images and biographical information, selections from the library's rare book collection and listening to oral histories from past UNMC leaders.

Earlier this month, the American College of Surgeons, the largest professional organization of surgeons in the world, permanently transferred an endowment to the University of Nebraska Foundation to support its H. Winnett Orr rare book collection. The collection that includes surgical archives has been on permanent loan to the UNMC McGoogan Health Sciences Library since the 1970s.

Late this fall, the library will offer online versions of the on-campus exhibits with expanded content. Immediately after the ribbon-cutting ceremony, a virtual tour will be available via the McGoogan Library website.

[Learn more about the Wigton Heritage Center at www.unmc.edu/wigton/index.html](http://www.unmc.edu/wigton/index.html)