

The Bandera PROPHECY

July 12, 2021

Today in Texas history

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1943, Baylor College of Medicine opened in a former Sears, Roebuck store in Houston. The school, the only private medical school in the southwest, was founded in Dallas in 1900 as the University of Dallas Medical Department, even though the University of Dallas did not yet exist.

Baylor University assumed control three years later, and awarded 1,670 M.D. degrees between 1903 and 1943. In the latter year, however, a severe conflict arose between civic leaders and physicians in Dallas and Baylor's Baptist administrators over the denominational character of the school.

In exchange for fiscal support and new quarters in a proposed medical center to be erected on Hines Boulevard in Dallas, the school was expected to relinquish administrative control and denominational affiliation. Under longtime dean Walter H. Moursund, a Presbyterian, the school extricated itself from this dilemma by accepting an invitation from the M. D. Anderson Foundation and other Houston benefactors to relocate to that city instead.

In 1947 the school moved to the Roy and Lillie Cullen Building, becoming the first institution to locate in the Texas Medical Center. The relationship between the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Baylor College of Medicine was terminated by mutual agreement in 1969, and the school became a nonsectarian, freestanding nonprofit corporation.