

## Michael J. Ahearn, PhD, tells a story about MD Anderson History and Leaders

Michael J. Ahearn, PhD joined the faculty of MD Anderson in 1965 in the Department of Clinical Pathology. He served as Dean of the School of Health Professions from 1987 until his retirement in 2011. In an interview conducted in 2011, he shares memories of MD Anderson's first full time president, R. Lee Clark, MD, and explains why all MD Anderson buildings have some pink detailing. Dr. Ahearn passed away in 2016.



### *Lee Clark and the Story of MD Anderson's Pink Marble*

Dr. Clark was such a charismatic person that he attracted people and got them to see the vision that he saw for MD Anderson. He could talk about anything. He had a tremendous engineering background, and was sort of a Renaissance man. In fact, being an engineer --you know, the stone that clad the original building is that pink marble that you see still today. He had seen that when he was in medical school in Georgia. He used to hitchhike back and forth from medical school to home on the weekends and would have to get up real early on Monday morning in order to be sure and catch a ride and be back at medical school by the time classes started. So he said as he would be standing on the highway, the sun would come up on this quarry. And he said that the marble took on a rosy pink glow that to him indicated hope. He said, "If I ever have a hospital I'm going to have that marble at the hospital." And so sure enough, R. Lee Clark had a hospital, and he used the pink marble. The only problem was that the quarry ran out of pink marble, and so now the additions have to have it stuccoed on the side. I understand that when the Anderson-Clayton Foundation gave the building, wanting to preserve the quality of the structure, they said that all additions should have that pink marble.

This interview clip was taken from an in-depth interview conducted for the Making Cancer History Voices Oral History Project. This ongoing project currently contains almost 400 interview hours with MD Anderson institution builders.

The transcript has been edited from the original.

The content is available for all uses.

**To explore the full interview go to:** <http://mdanderson.libguides.com/AhearnM>

Note: This clip has been read from Dr. Ahearn's transcript by former faculty member, Warren Holleman, PhD

**Interview Clip Identification:**

Session number and date: 01, 08/02/2011

Segment: 02

**Citations: Please provide the following information**

Interview Subject's name, Clip Title, Date of Session, Historical Resources Center, Research Medical Library, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

**To request an uncompressed audio file, photographs, or for information about the interview and photo collections, contact:** Javier Garza, MSIS, [jjgarza@mdanderson.org](mailto:jjgarza@mdanderson.org)