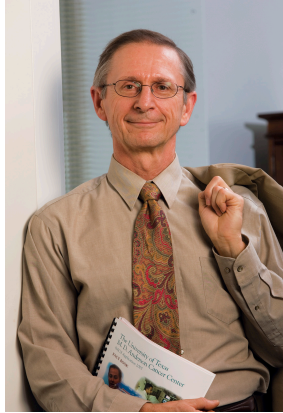


An MD Anderson Story About: **MD Anderson History**



Stephen Tomasovic, PhD (ret.)

Senior VP, Academic Affairs
(2006 – 2011)

The Origins of MD Anderson and the Oral History Project

In the 1940s when the institution was created, cancer was a death sentence. People didn't like to talk about cancer. Public awareness was relatively low. People whispered about it in families. But it was a terrible terrible ravaging disease. And the treatments that we had were quite primitive compared to now. Massive radical surgeries that left people extraordinarily disfigured. Caustic agents. Radiation that was very poorly controlled and delivered to lots of unnecessary structures in the body. So the morbidity and the mortality from the treatments was severe. And people were extremely afraid of the disease and afraid to talk about it. And so the people who committed to those kinds of careers were dealing with a very very difficult disease. And MD Anderson was a place where people came who really had a mission and believed in that mission, and many of them spent their entire lives here, and some of them died from the exposure to the agents that they were trying to develop for use to make them safer for people.

So those are the stories that we wanted to save and promote. And help contribute to our shared sense of mission, provide a resource for researchers in the future, and try to save some of that important information.

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About This Content

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/TomasovicSP>

About the speaker:

Stephen Tomasovic, PhD was a member of the Department of Molecular and Cellular Oncology. He was the founder of the Cancer Biology Program and served as Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs from 2006 until his retirement in 2011.

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Interview Collection: Tacey A. Rosolowski, PhD, trosolowski@mdanderson.org

Photos and archival material: Javier Garza, MSIS, jjgarza@mdanderson.org