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Dayton VA Medical Center to unveil homage to historical directors

DAYTON, Ohio -- The Dayton VA Medical Center will pay homage to all its historical, and current, directors with the unveiling of its Director's Wall at 3 p.m. April 13 in the medical center.

The wall will include portraits from every governor, manager and director over the past 150 years.

That week, 150 years ago, marked the arrival of the first administrators to the National Home for Disabled Veteran Soldiers Central Branch.

The campus directors, previously referred to as governors and managers, have led the Dayton VA Medical Center through multiple iterations over the last 150 years, going from a National Soldiers' Home, to the Veterans Bureau and Veterans Administration, before eventually becoming the Dayton VA Medical Center.

The Dayton campus was the forerunner to many federal social programs existing today, as it provided for all the needs of our Civil War Veterans. From the outset, Veterans were given a 'zest for life' through healthful exercise, reading, music, and peaceful surroundings, as well as healthcare programs preparing them to re-enter society. The founders took great pride in establishing rehabilitative workshops during the first year of operation. The Veterans were taught a trade or how to manage a business in order to become independent of the Soldiers Home. Other branches were to establish workshops later, but no branch matched the variety and success of the Dayton Soldiers Home.

National focus was placed on the hospital, which opened in 1870 and was widely regarded as the best hospital in the United States at that time. National focus was also placed on the Home Chapel since it was the first permanent church constructed by the U.S. Government. The campus, with its grotto and gardens, became a popular tourist destination with accommodations including a hotel and restaurant, and attractions that included animal exhibits like alligators. At its peak, the campus welcomed more than 600,000 tourists per year to the Dayton area.

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For more information about the event, contact Ted Froats at (937) 267-3919 or ted.froats@va.gov.

For more information about the history of the Dayton VA Medical Center, visit our [Virtual Museum](#).

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