

The Buildings of Dalhousie University

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Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building

Address: 5850 College St.

Start Date: July 29, 1965

Completion Date: 1967

Architect: J. Philip
Dumaresq; Affleck,
Desbarats

Renovation Date(s):
1999; 2003-2004; 2005

Contractor: Kenney
Construction Company,
Limited



Tupper Building construction, n.d.



Tupper Building construction, n.d.

Building History

The Sir Charles Tupper Medical Building, more commonly called the Tupper Building, was a project tied to Canada's Centennial in 1967. Dalhousie's Board of Governors had been looking ahead to a medical building since the late 1950s. The Forrest Building, the oldest on the Carleton Campus, had become old, crowded and inadequate, and even with the Burbidge Building (then the Medical Sciences Building), the growth of the school was impeded. Without a new medical building, by 1967 half of the Medical School applicants would have to be turned away.

Then in 1964, the federal government chose Dalhousie's proposed Medical Building to be Nova Scotia's Confederation Memorial Project. This meant \$2.5 million from the federal government, and an equal amount matched by the province. In 1967 \$9.5 million came from the federal Health Resources Fund. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation of Michigan gave \$420,000 for the establishment of the W.K. Kellogg Health Sciences Library. Additional funds came from Dalhousie alumni, with Dalhousie making up the difference of \$2.75 million. The total cost of the building in the end was \$13 million plus \$5 for equipment.

J. Philip Dumaresq, also architect for the Dentistry Building, designed the Tupper Building. Dalhousie desired modifications to his plans, and these were made by the Montreal-based firm Affleck, Desbarats. Construction was contracted to Kenney Construction Company, Ltd. The Tupper Building is a fifteen-storey high-rise with a two-storey annex linking it to the Clinical Research Centre. It was Nova Scotia's largest centennial project and established an impressive new home for the Medical School that was symbolic of Nova Scotia's contribution to Medicare.

The Tupper Building was seen as a fit Centennial project because it is named after Sir Charles Tupper (1821-1915), one of the Fathers of Confederation. Tupper was Premier of Nova Scotia from 1864 to 1867, and founding President of the Canadian Medical Association.



Tupper Building, n.d.

Along with Joseph Howe, he helped resuscitate Dalhousie in the 1860s and was on the university's Board of Governors until his death in 1915.

Construction of the Tupper Building began in July, 1965 and the official opening occurred on July 14, 1967. Honourable guests included the Queen Mother, Prime Minister Lester Pearson, and the 16th Earl of Dalhousie, who agreed to attend on the condition that he could go fishing with President Henry Hicks following the ceremony.

The Tupper Building brought together all the Medical departments from locations scattered across the campus. The building featured a medical lab, research and teaching space, the departments of Anatomy, Microanatomy, Biochemistry, and Pharmacology as well as research space for Pathology and Bacteriology. The annex had four lecture halls, seminar rooms and student facilities.

The W.K. Kellogg Health Sciences Library took the place of the small, brick Medical-Dentistry Library that used to stand where the Tupper Building now does. "The Kellogg" opened with 20,000 square feet of space, stack capacity for 100,000 volumes and seating for 170. It is named for William Keith Kellogg, American entrepreneur, inventor of corn flakes and lifelong philanthropist. His foundation, established in 1930, seeks to "help people help themselves through the practical application of knowledge and resources to improve their quality of life and that of future generations" (Mission Statement, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, <http://www.wkkf.org/WhoWeAre/Default.aspx>).

Renovations and repairs were carried out in the Tupper Building in 1999 when \$10 million was spent upgrading the heating, ventilation and electrical systems. Smaller projects such as lab upgrades are regularly necessary, such as improvements on the fourth and sixth floors in 2005. In 2004 the newly created Stem-Cell Restoration Lab, part of the Brain Repair Centre, opened its doors.

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Tupper Medical Building, n.d.



Tupper Building Opening, July 1967

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