

Gabriel Hortobagyi, MD, tells a story about an Early Leader

Dr. Hortobagyi served as Chief of the Section of Breast Medical Oncology (1984 – 1992) and was the Founding Chair of the Department of Breast Medical Oncology (1992 – 2012). MD Anderson's first president, R. Lee Clark, MD, was still at the institution when Dr. Hortobagyi arrived in 1974 as a Fellow in Developmental Therapeutics. In an interview conducted in 2013, he talks about Dr. Clark's influence.

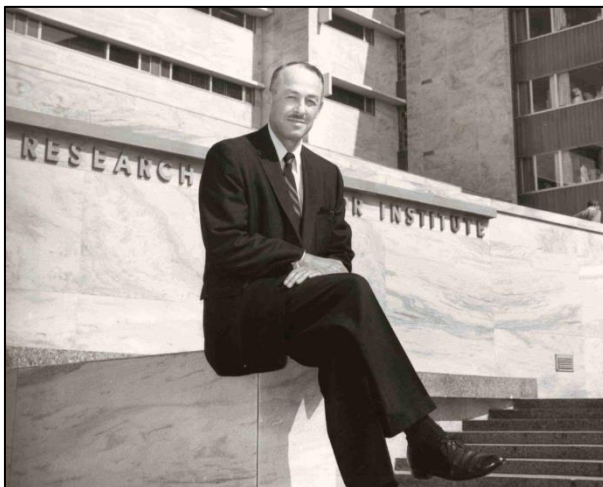


## *R. Lee Clark's Vision and Gifts*

Just put yourself in the situation of Texas in 1941. This was a backwater town, and how people lived here without air conditioning and in a swamp that had endemic malaria and yellow fever in a very primitive state. We are light years ahead of what this was at that time.

Lee Clark had an incredible vision. He built this institution from scratch. The joke used to be that Lee would go up to Austin when the legislature was meeting and he would present the MD Anderson budget, and there would be dead silence. And then someone would timidly ask, "But Dr. Clark, are you sure that's all you need?" So he had a great deal of influence in Austin, and he knew how to use that influence and how to use that power.

Lee Clark had to struggle nationally with the perception from the Brahmins from the northeast... He was going to develop a competitive, first-class cancer center in the middle of Texas. You have to have incredible vision and courage. Not only did he do that, but in a very short period of time he managed to put this institution on the map.



R. Lee Clark, MD  
First President, 1946 to 1978

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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 500 interview hours with MD Anderson institution builders.

The transcript has been edited from the original.

The content is available for public use.

**Interview link:** <http://mdanderson.libguides.com/HortobagyiGN>

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**To request an audio file, photographs, or for information about the interview and photo collections, contact:**

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