



Atrium  
Medical Center

F O U N D A T I O N

# LEGENDS

**FROM THE HILL TO THE ATRIUM**

*A Tribute to the Men and Women  
Who Made It Happen*

ISSUE 2:

*E. O. Bauer, MD, and John L. Bauer, MD  
Outstanding Physicians at Middletown Hospital*

Father and son, E. O. Bauer, MD, and John L. Bauer, MD, were outstanding physicians, avid outdoorsmen and devoted community leaders who, each in his own way and in his own time, left an indelible mark on southwest Ohio.

## E. O. Bauer, MD



One of 11 children of German immigrants, Edward O. Bauer, known to all as E. O., was born in 1882 and grew up in Batavia, Ohio. His family tenant-farmed before settling down on their own land, Belt Farm, when E. O. was 10 years old. Although not destined to become a full-time farmer himself, E. O. never lost his love for nature and the outdoors. In later years, he co-owned a small farm near Washington Courthouse, Ohio, with one of his brothers and also became an avid gardener.

“After retirement, he liked to fish, hunt and work in the yard at his house on South Dixie Highway,” notes his grandson, John L. Bauer, Jr., a former Armco environmental researcher and lobbyist who, along with his wife, Beth, now divides his time between Jeffersonton, Virginia, and Vero Beach, Florida. “My dad and I would visit him on Sundays. I remember grandpa in his flannel shirt relaxing in his chair and gazing at the woods.”

### TEACHER TURNED DOCTOR

After studying on his own to pass the state teaching exam and teaching at a country school for two years, E. O. entered Miami Medical College (now the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine), graduated in 1909 and served as house surgeon at Cincinnati General Hospital from 1909 until 1911.



Soon after coming to Middletown in 1911, E. O. married Helen Lawrence. They had one son, John “Jack” Bauer, born in 1915. In Middletown, E. O. set up practice in general medicine and surgery at 64 South Main Street. He, Helen and Jack lived above the office for many years. After Helen passed away in 1935, E. O. married Juanita DeArmond and they had one son, Edward Jr., now deceased.

### **A DRIVING FORCE FOR A NEW HOSPITAL**

With plans underway for Middletown’s first hospital, E. O. was a driving force behind selecting a location and planning for the new facility, which opened its doors with 28 beds on March 5, 1917. As the hospital’s first surgeon and chief of staff, E. O. admitted patient No. 1 to the new facility, a woman who underwent a successful appendectomy. She went home after 19 days.

In 1921, having just returned from a post-graduate course at the Mayo Clinic, E. O. performed the hospital’s first blood transfusion. It was



## DAVE REGAN Here And There

Many physicians have come to Middletown in recent years, giving Middletown as fine a cross section of medical skills as any city of its size in the country.

And much of the credit for making this city a place attractive for medical practice belongs to such men as E. O. Bauer, who died here Wednesday.

**FOR 42 YEARS** Dr. Bauer gave this city much more than his great skills as a physician and surgeon; he gave it high ethical standards. As chief of staff at Middle-

town Hospital he was a stern taskmaster, but the younger doctors who came here to practice learned a great deal not taught in medical school. Dr. Bauer shared with them his knowledge but, more than that, he laid down principles of practice that saved them from many pitfalls.

**WE KNEW HIM** well. He was a good friend but, on occasion, when we crossed swords with him as a newspaperman, he could be a devastating adversary.

And this trait — as guardian of the sanctity of the patient and as a strict disciplinarian about everything that went on

within Middletown Hospital — won him the admiration of the young men who looked to him for guidance and counsel.

**NOTHING** aggravated him more than sloppiness in dress or in practice.

We remember the “dressing” he gave a doctor who failed to dress as he felt a physician should. “You’re a doctor,” he told the young man, “dress like one.”

But he laughed later in the day when the young doctor, with a wry sense of humor, called him at his office and said, “You know, Dr. Bauer, I’ve looked all over town and I can’t find a coat to match my trousers!”

hailed by the *Middletown Journal* as a “miracle of modern medicine.” Given to a man suffering from pernicious anemia, the transfusion was deemed a complete success. The *Journal* noted that the “hospital clearly intends to take the lead in use of modern equipment and technologies.”

Except for his service as a U.S. Army captain and surgeon in 1918, E. O. lived and worked in Middletown and was hospital chief of staff until his retirement in 1953. He died in 1968 at age 86. Upon his passing, the *Journal* noted, “For 42 years Dr. Bauer gave this city much more than his great skills as a physician and surgeon; he gave it high ethical standards... Younger doctors who came here to practice learned a great deal not taught in medical school.”

## John L. Bauer, MD

E. O.’s son John L. Bauer, known as Jack, attended the University of Virginia and the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, graduating in 1943. He served as an intern, junior resident and senior resident at Cincinnati General Hospital. After spending a year at

Harvard teaching and doing research, he returned to Cincinnati as chief resident.

In 1947, Jack began his solo practice in Middletown as an internist, with an emphasis on cardiology and caring for the elderly. Jack had planned to be a surgeon, like his father, but missed a year of medical school due to a bout of tuberculosis. Upon returning to school, he decided to change his specialty.

### **A DOCTOR'S DOCTOR**

“Back then, we did not have all the cardiology diagnostic technology we have today,” notes Jerry Hammond, MD, retired family physician and Jack’s friend. “To be a good cardiologist, you had to be talented diagnostician and skilled at reading EKGs. Jack was a doctor’s doctor. His waiting room on any given day was like a who’s who of Middletown.”

Jack met his wife-to-be, Jeanne Sebald, while both were children growing up on South Main Street. Their paths crossed again in college and they married in 1941. The Bauers lived near the hospital on The Alameda for a while and, in 1954, moved to Thorn Hill Lane. Upon Jeanne’s death in 1995, their daughter, Peggy Dobrozsi, and her husband, Pete, moved into the house, where they still live today. Jack’s workshop, where he liked to tinker – tying flies and making fly rods from fine Tonkin cane bamboo imported from China – still stands on the corner of the property.



“We enjoyed hunting and fishing together,” remembers Louis Gaker, MD. “Jack would give his handcrafted fly rods to his friends. I still have mine, but I have never used it. To me, it’s a work of art that I cherish. Jack was a brilliant guy.”

## **COMMITTED TO GIVING BACK**

A fellow of both the American College of Physicians and the American College of Cardiology, Jack served as president of the medical staff at Middletown Hospital and on the executive committee of the hospital board of trustees. Jeanne and Jack were strong believers in the importance of giving back to the community. Both were active in the Middletown Civic Association (now the United Way). Jeanne was a hospital volunteer and very involved in the Red Cross; Jack served as the chairman of the first board of directors of the city’s Public Health Nursing Bureau.

“Dad was a very dedicated doctor with a great deal of respect for his patients,” Peggy says. “He had a lot of integrity and pride in his profession. He dressed impeccably every day. Even on Christmas Day, he made his rounds at the hospital in a sport coat and tie.”

## **LOVED THE OUTDOORS**

“Like his own father, dad loved the outdoors,” John notes. “He was interested in Native American lore, fossils and books about the West. My father never met a stranger. He would go hunting or fishing and come back with a new friend.”

In 1974, Jack was diagnosed with cancer and reluctantly retired. “He sought what was leading-edge treatment at the time. It was a terrible loss for all of us when he passed away in 1979 at age 63,” says Ronnie Jurkowitz, Jack’s office nurse and a family friend.

“I remember him as a very proper, private person, with a great sense of humor. We laughed a lot,” she says. “He treated everyone with equal respect. He talked to people in a way they could understand. And I never heard him say a bad word about anyone.”

Asked what her grandfather and father would think of the evolution of the Middletown Hospital they knew into the Atrium Medical Center of today, Peggy says, “My grandfather was very progressive in his thinking. He was always learning and encouraged those around him to learn.

“And my father,” she continues, “used to get so excited every time a new addition was made to Middletown Hospital. I can’t help but think that both of them would be so proud to see how the hospital they both loved continues to flourish.”



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This article is the second in a series of profiles celebrating the 2017 centennial anniversary of Atrium Medical Center (formerly Middletown Hospital and Middletown Regional Hospital). The series honors men and women whose civic-mindedness and genuine caring for others helped Middletown grow and contributed to establishment of the first-class medical center the region boasts today.