

Yesterday & Today: Sun City Medical Building



The Sun City Medical Building as it first appeared when it opened in 1961. By the late 1960s, the building was home to several physicians, including Dr. Edgar Deissler, left, and Dr. Robert Stump. The color photo is the building as it appears today, with the original sign still standing.

Sun City's first doctor charged \$7 for local house call

One of the first buildings constructed in Sun City was a medical office located directly behind the community's first shopping center and across the street from what is today home to the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

The Sun City Medical Building, home to the community's first physician, was located at 10820 W. Oakmont Drive and remains today nearly identical to how it looked in the early 1960s.

Del Webb knew it was important for his new retirement community to have its own physician, but he also knew it would be a challenge to entice a doctor to open a practice in a community with fewer than 500 homes. The company was finally able to entice Dr. Robert Stump to relocate to Sun City.

But there was a problem: To be close to patients in the event of an emergency, it was important that Dr. Stump live in Sun City. But Dr. Stump had a 10-year-old son and Sun City did not allow children.

After the Webb Company allowed the Stumps to purchase a house in Sun City, angry residents voiced complaints and eventually held three community meetings to vote on whether Dr. Stump and his son could remain in the community. One vote ended in a tie, while the other two reflected the majority's pref-

erence the doctor be allowed to remain in Sun City to better serve his patients.

Dr. Stump served Sun City for many years and initially charged \$7 for a house call. The Webb Company sold the Sun City Medical Building in the mid-1970s. Unable (or unwilling) to pay the increased rent charged by the new owners, Dr. Stump shut down his practice and retired.

When the Sun City Medical Building first opened in 1961, the nearest hospital was in Phoenix. It would be several years before a small hospital opened in Youngtown, and nearly 10 years before Sun City opened its own hospital.

Dr. Stump participated in the planning of the community's first hospital, originally planned to be constructed on the corner of 103rd Avenue and Coggins Drive. He and other physicians served as advisors to a committee of residents planning the facility, which would eventually become Boswell Hospital and built on land north of Grand Avenue.

In the mid-1960s, the Sun City Medical Building would serve as the fundraising campaign headquarters of the "Community Hospital Fund."

The building today, at least from the outside, remains nearly identical to how it appeared in the 1960s.