

# Hughes Institute Grow Rapidly If Courts Back Purported Will

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MIAMI, April 30—The Howard Hughes Research Institute here could become the country's largest private foundation devoted to biomedical research and a major world force in the medical attack against a wide variety of diseases if the document filed in a Las Vegas court yesterday proves to be Mr. Hughes's genuine last will and testament.

A document purporting to be in Mr. Hughes's handwriting and containing several misspellings stated that "after my death my estate is to be divided as follows—first: one-fourth of all my assets go to Hughes Medical Institute of Miami."

Mr. Hughes was sole trustee of the controversial medical research institute that owns the Hughes Aircraft Corporation. The institute grants highly prized awards to medical investigators throughout the country on the basis of its earnings from the Hughes Aircraft Corporation, which is estimated to be worth \$154 million.

Mr. Hughes's fortune, estimated at at least \$1.5 billion, was earned largely through Government contracts, including secret ones from the Central Intelligence Agency.

Since the Howard Hughes Research Institute was incorporated in Delaware in 1953 and its headquarters were set up here, the institute has been a subject of growing controversy.

## Fund Allotment Scored

Congressmen have accused the institute of spending a small fraction of its earnings on medical research and of not living up to the spirit of the law concerning the divestiture of foundation wealth.

The Internal Revenue Service has investigated the institute over the last six years but has not ruled on whether it is a public or private foundation. Its status would affect how much it must spend each year.

In 1972, Hughes Aircraft earned \$17.4 million after taxes and gave \$3 million to the institute, presumably plowing the \$14 million difference back into the corporation. From 1969 to 1971 the institute spent \$1.6 million on research, though Hughes Aircraft after-tax earnings ranged from \$2.6 to \$7.3 million. Up to 45 percent of the institute's share from the Hughes Aircraft went to pay off a loan from the Summa Corporation, Mr. Hughes's holding company.

According to interviews with several Hughes Institute researchers, heads of foundations active in medical affairs and other medical leaders, the Hughes Institute operated with the secrecy characteristic of Mr. Hughes himself and unlike other medical research groups.

The Hughes Institute does not publish an annual report, as other medical foundations customarily do. No one outside the institute knows the full extent of its programs or precisely how it decides which medical investigators to support. Institute officials were not willing

to discuss either its future or its past.

Dr. George W. Thorn, a Harvard endocrinologist who has directed the institute's medical research program since 1956, has testified before Congress that Hughes investigators were among the researchers associated with the earliest work with the hormones ACTH and cortisone, kidney transplant surgery, the development of methods to measure damage to the heart muscle after heart attacks, and the toxic effects of drugs on fetuses and adults.

Other researchers disputed a contention of Dr. Thorn that his institute investigators "initiated" the artificial kidney dialysis program.

## Hand-Picked Researchers

The success Dr. Thorn claimed for the institute has come through its financial support of hand-picked promising young clinical researchers, called Hughes medical investigators, in a select few medical schools.

In a statement filed with the Internal Revenue Service, the institute said that, as of Dec. 31, 1974, it had 85 employees, including 60 research investigators and 14 other laboratory personnel working at the institute here and 12 medical school hospitals—Baylor, Duke, Johns Hopkins, Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, Stanford, University of California, San Francisco; University of Miami, University of Utah, University of Washington in Seattle, Vanderbilt, Washington University in St. Louis, and Yale. Dr. Thorn is chief physician at Peter Bent Brigham.

Dr. Thorn heads the medical advisory board that selects the Hughes investigators. As of 1974, the other board members were Dr. Hans Neurath, a biochemist at the University of Washington in Seattle; Dr. Charles R. Park, a physiologist at Vanderbilt in Nashville; Dr. Victor A. McKusick, a geneticist at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, and Dr. James B. Wyngaarden, a metabolism expert at Duke in Durham, N. C.

In 1974, Dr. Thorn received a \$31,000 salary for his half-time position plus \$4,700 expenses. The other board members were paid \$10,000 plus expenses, independent of their university salaries, for devoting 15 percent of their time to the Hughes board.

## U. of Miami Location

The institute's headquarters consist of laboratories and wood-paneled offices that occupy one and a half floors of the Medical Arts Building adjacent to the University of Miami's medical school complex. The institute has no patient care facilities and most of its money is spent on research done in other cities.

Researchers funded by the institute said that they were completely free to pursue their own interests without interference from Hughes officials to do other projects.

Over the last two decades, the Hughes institute has given University of Miami researchers about \$6 million, with a peak of \$650,000 a year. But as the institute expanded its program to other schools, sup-

port has dwindled to about \$250,000 this year for five investigators working in biochemistry, blood disorders, genetics and other fields.

Dr. Emanuel M. Papper, University of Miami vice president for medical affairs, said that the Hughes institute was not formally connected with the school.

Dr. Vern Mason, a surgeon who, until his death a decade ago, was a long-time friend of Mr. Hughes, was said to have told other persons that Mr. Hughes had wanted to associate the institute with a private medical school, a new one that had no large endowment and no vested interests. Mr. Hughes had reportedly asked the late Dr. Herman Weiskotten, who had retired as dean of Syracuse Medical School, to set up the institute in Miami.

"It was a big surprise to us," Dr. Homer Marsh, the University of Miami's first medical school dean said. "We were told that Hughes wanted to leave his money to medical research for anything other than cancer." He recalled a meeting that he attended with Dr. Mason and Dr. Weiskotten at Bal Harbour Hotel in Miami Beach.

"I have the distinct feeling that Hughes was present but we didn't see him. By that, I mean Mason would disappear now and then and come back and talk some more. I had the idea that Hughes was sitting in the next room. It was like working with a ghost," Mr. Marsh said.

Months passed before Mr. Hughes set up the institute's first office, not at the medical school but in a dingy theater building on Miami Beach. Dr. Marsh went on:

"We had visions of large financial support that didn't materialize. We wanted a formal affiliation because we were all selfish and we wanted to cash in on Hughes's name to attract more support for the medical school. But a formal affiliation was never made. Everything depended on our friendship with Drs. Mason and Weiskotten who were influential with Hughes."

Mr. Hughes's earliest move was to set up a library. A college student, Kenneth E. Wright, who worked as a doorman at the hotel where Mr. Hughes stayed, became the institute's librarian. Now the former doorman is paid \$36,000 plus expenses as the institute's administrator.

Mr. Hughes's original idea was to support medical research through two plans. One was to build an institute here modeled on the Rockefeller Institute where doctors could come to do research and relax in the sun. Mr. Hughes also planned to support research done elsewhere in this country.

## Quick Change of Mind

In 1956, Mr. Hughes selected Dr. George Burch of Tulane, a leading cardiologist and heart-disease researcher, to set about duplicating the Rockefeller Institute, where Dr. Burch had worked. Dr. Burch, after several visits to Mr. Hughes and many middle-of-the-night telephone calls, accepted the position just before leaving to lecture in Oregon.

Over the next four days, Dr. Burch developed second thoughts about this decision to switch from doing research to becoming an administrator. While changing planes at San Francisco Airport on the return to New Orleans, Dr. Burch called Mr. Hughes and reversed his decision.

Thereafter, Mr. Hughes apparently abandoned the Rockefeller plan and his institute concentrated quietly on supporting hand-picked young medical investigators at a few medical schools.

Earlier this week, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report emphasized the C.I.A.'s extensive ties to American universities and foundations. Because of the unusual nature of the Hughes institute's financial support for research, the secrecy of its operations, and previous disclosures about Mr. Hughes's involvement with the C.I.A. in building the Glomar Explorer to raise a sunken Russian submarine, some have questioned possible connections between the C.I.A., the Hughes institute and selected medical schools.