



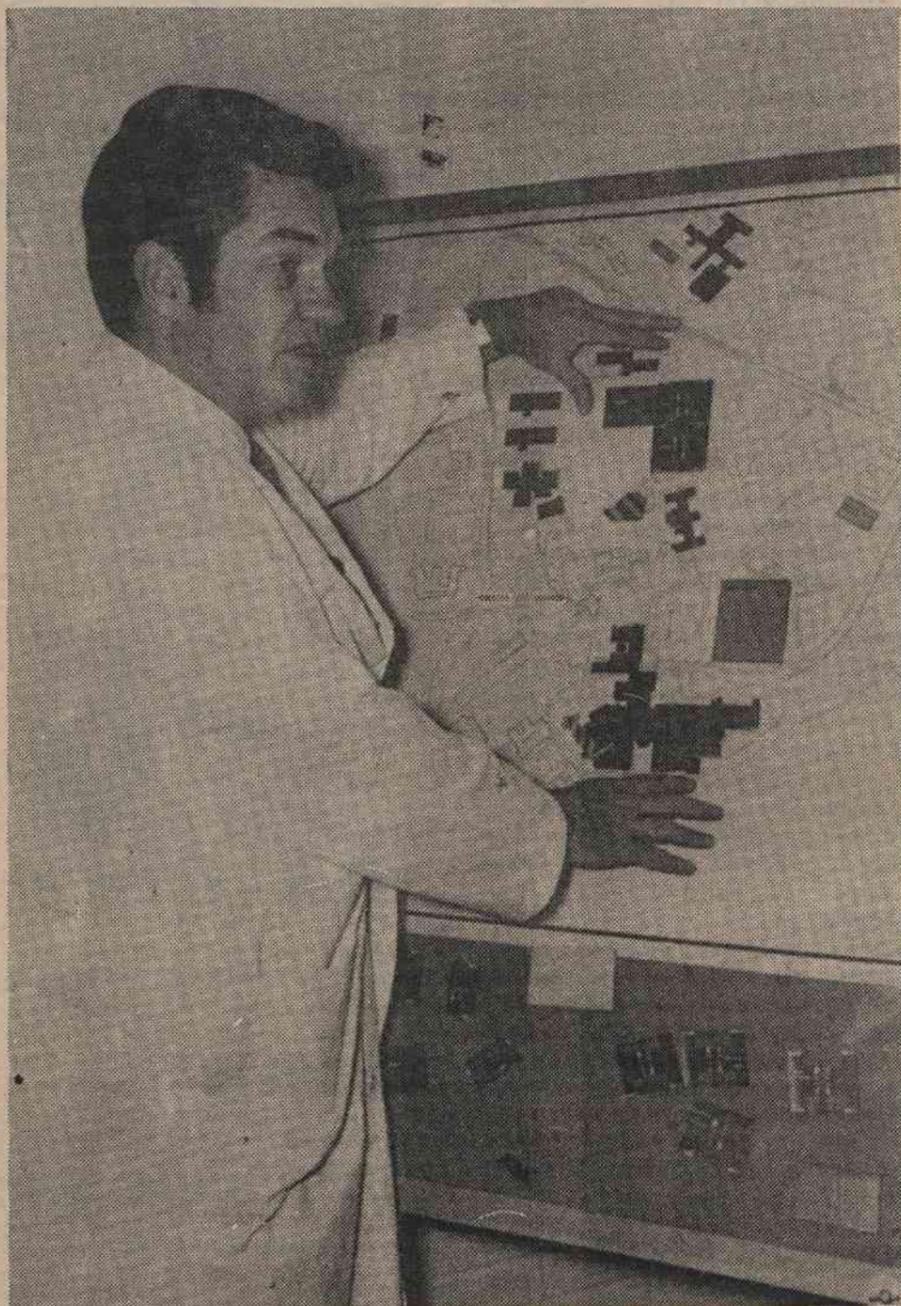
# Intercom

duke university medical center

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**PROPOSED NEW HOSPITAL IN HIS HANDS**—The University Board of Trustees last weekend authorized retention of the architectural firm of Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum, Inc., of St. Louis to draw plans for the proposed new Duke Hospital. The board anticipates that equity funding—the “down payment” Duke must come up with as a final step in the go-ahead on the \$91 million project—will be obtained in March. In this picture, Dr. Stuart Sessoms, director of Duke Hospital, uses a magnetic board to show where a new hospital would be built. At Sessoms’ right hand is the present hospital. Immediately below his left hand is the new Eye Center, and the large block below that indicates the location of the new hospital. At the extreme top of the board is the V.A. Hospital.

## M.C. Christmas Festivities Scheduled for Thursday

There’ll be free turkeys, punch, nuts, candy canes, brownies, music and Santa Claus waiting for everybody at the Medical Center Christmas Party next Thursday, Dec. 20.

The party will be held again this year in the Courtyard Cafeteria, which will be decorated for the occasion by the Department of Dietetics.

The hours will be 2-4:30 p.m. and from 10 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

Dietetics is providing 20 free turkeys as door prizes. When people enter the cafeteria, they will receive a numbered ticket which will have a stub with the same number. The employee will retain half the ticket and the other numbered

part will go into a container for the drawing.

Two turkeys will be drawn for each half hour during the evening and night. Only the ticket stubs deposited in the container during a specific half-hour period will be drawn from for the turkeys during that period.

But you don’t have to be there to win. If you have to leave before the drawing during the half-hour when your ticket is in the box, you can check back later to see if your number was drawn, or you can check the glass-covered bulletin board at the end of the hallway past the cafeteria on Friday morning. Unclaimed numbers

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### Psychologist Lucas Believes

## Most Americans Avoid Planning for Death

Death and taxes are both sure things, but few of us spend as much time planning for death as we do preparing for taxes.

If you were to die tomorrow, is your will in order, your insurance up to date, your estate provided for? Does your husband or wife know what kind of funeral you want, how you want your children raised, how you feel about his or her remarrying? Do you know how your spouse feels about death?

“Death is an exceedingly important part of life, and most Americans really haven’t given it enough thought,” said Dr. Richard Lucas.

Lucas is an exception.

As a staff psychologist at the VA Hospital and an associate in medical psychology at Duke, he deals with death every day in his role as friend and counselor to the chronically and incurably ill.

His patients, like most Americans, had not given much thought to dying either.

“There is a cultural taboo in our society against talking about death,” Lucas said. “I have been concerned that in the U.S., medical professionals too often only see the families of these patients when the disease is diagnosed and then again when the patient dies.

“I have been concerned about what professionals and paraprofessionals can do in the interim to help the patient and his family face the possibility of death.”

What Lucas offers these patients is a chance to talk about something they may have considered unspeakable. And from his experience and studies he has carried out, he has found that death can be openly discussed not only with the incurably ill patient, but with the patient and spouse together.

“A discussion about dying will often break the ice and introduce other problems that the couple needs to come to grips with, such as marital problems which have caused tensions but which have been avoided because the spouse is dying.

“It is often a great comfort to the

chronically ill or dying person to get things like this settled and the practical matters taken care of.”

In a questionnaire study conducted by Lucas among male hemodialysis patients and their wives, he found that these chronically ill kidney patients showed no more anxiety about death than that shown by healthy persons.

“Being exposed to the possibility of death forces them to think about it and it seems to reduce the fear somewhat,” he said.

In contrast, he found a much higher death anxiety rate among persons facing surgery, even such minor surgery as hernia repair.

Among the hemodialysis patients and their wives, Lucas said, it was rare to find a couple who had extensively discussed death and dying until he talked with them. “There seemed the general belief that to discuss directly such material is inappropriate and harmful,” he said.

For those who had discussed it earlier, he said, there was a kind of realistic sadness present, but both husband and wife expressed relief at having come to grips with the situation.

Many of the couples had earlier avoided discussions of death because they feared their attitudes might differ from each other’s, he said. But the study showed that spouses tend to show very similar attitudes about death and dying.

He found that it is usually more important for the couple to talk and share their feelings about death than to withhold expression of such attitudes.

Lucas believes that persons who work with the incurably ill can perform an important role by aiding patients and their families in breaking down cultural taboos and talking out their feelings.

But Lucas believes that healthy people would also benefit by sitting down with their spouses and “thinking about the unthinkable.”

“It has changed my own life dramatically working in this setting,” he said. “It has forced me to think

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## University Holidays Set

The university will observe the Christmas holidays on Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 24 and 25. The New Year’s holidays will be on Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

In 1974 the Christmas holidays will be observed on three days, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, Dec. 25, 26 and 27.

The following is a list of holidays to be observed by the university during 1974:

New Year’s Day	January 1, 1974
Easter Monday	April 15, 1974
Memorial Day	May 27, 1974
Independence Day Holidays	July 4, 5 1974
Labor Day	September 2, 1974
Thanksgiving Holidays	November 28, 29, 1974
Christmas Holidays	December 25, 26, 27, 1974