



Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine Ward Portraits Undergo Restoration



The Wards are back! Actually, the portraits of pioneer Chicago catalog retailer A. Montgomery Ward and his wife, Elizabeth, have returned from being restored and again are firmly ensconced in the lobby of the Feinberg School of Medicine's oldest building, completed in 1926.

The portraits were gone for several months during the restoration, which was partly funded by a gift from the A. Montgomery Ward Foundation. With improved lighting, the Wards' brighter images are more visible to the many students and faculty and staff members who pass by them each day.

Born in New Jersey in 1844, Mr. Ward grew up in Michigan. He attended school until age 14 and then became an apprentice to a barrel-stave maker. He also worked as a laborer, shoemaker, and store clerk. In

1872 he and a partner established the world's first mail-order business that was popular in rural pre-World War II America. The first catalog was just one page, listing 162 items. Eleven years later, the Montgomery Ward & Company catalog had grown to 240 pages with 10,000 items. With the urbanization that took place in the United States after WWII, the company began a slow decline. Ward's merged with other companies and in 1985 discontinued its catalog.

Mr. Ward died in 1913. His widow decided to honor his memory by donating \$4 million toward construction of the first building on Northwestern University's Chicago campus that would house its medical and dental schools. In making the gift for the 14-story building constructed of Indiana limestone, she wrote, "...The ideal of service dominates the various schools of Northwestern University. I have selected as a memorial the Medical Center because of its commanding site overlooking the lake and because it will render a large measure of service to humanity."

Mrs. Ward died soon after the Ward Building was dedicated in 1926, but she and her husband's portraits remain in the lobby to watch over the continuing service that the Feinberg School community provides.

