

## 1964: Roger White, MD and The Last Cadillac Ambulance 1980



Roger Dean White, MD, a young cardiologist at the Mayo Clinic of Rochester, Minnesota, was considered an early EMS pioneer due to his support of the Rochester based Gold Cross Ambulance Service, Inc. In 1964, the Mayo Clinic had discontinued the operation of its ambulance service and had contracted with Gold Cross to continue coverage. The private company had become the first Minnesota ambulance service to require that all staff members be certified as Red Cross First Aid Instructors and later to be trained in CPR. Dr. White and Gold Cross also soon developed a field delivered rural ambulance attendant training course at the request of the Minnesota State Department of Education. This course was designed for small rural communities and actually pre-dated the 81-hour Federal Department of Transportation EMT-Ambulance basic training course. In 1969, Gold Cross had purchased a portable monitor that allowed attendants to monitor patients in transit. Dr. White, also provided clinical training in intravenous therapy techniques to the ambulance attendants. Therefore, under medical direction from the Mayo Clinic, Gold Cross became the first ambulance service in the U.S. Upper Midwest Region to establish intravenous (I.V.) pathways on patients in the field. In 1970, Dr. White was formally appointed as volunteer medical advisor to Gold Cross.

In 1971, enthused by the success of the Gold Cross I.V. program, the Mayo Clinic invested in a mobile cardiac telemetry radio system. Dr. White supervised the training of several Gold Cross attendants for a formal mobile coronary care program which became fully operational during 1971. This resulted in Gold Cross becoming Minnesota's first mobile coronary care unit (MCCU).

In 1972, Gold Cross contracted with another city and expanded ambulance and paramedic care coverage to Duluth. The Gold Cross Rochester operation soon expanded to include eight vehicles, five of which the service equipped as paramedic units. The service also expanded to provide specialized coronary and neonate patient transfer capabilities within in the Mayo Clinic service region.

The Gold Cross paramedic program continued to expand and soon provided free CPR training to local citizens and provided instructors to the local community college EMT courses. It was interesting to note that the Gold Cross EMS development was not dependant on federal, state or local tax funds.

Dr. White, continued to promote National EMS development through serving as a member of the a member of the editorial board of **The EMT Journal**, a director of the **National Registry of EMTs**, a board of directors member of the **National Association of EMTs**, and a member of the **American Heart Association's Emergency Cardiac Care Committee**.



One other noteworthy personal accomplishment, Dr. White took possession of the last Cadillac Ambulance produced in the United States: a Superior Ambulance, picked up at their plant in Lima Ohio on February 19, 1980. The ambulance was sold last to Dr. D. Richard of Bloomfield Hills, MI.