

Geneticist Dr. Haynes Robinson has enjoyed a remarkable 50-year career and has garnered national recognition for his outstanding contributions to medicine. During his years at Akron Children's alone, he has made significant achievements. He was the hospital's second African American resident! In 1977, he founded the Genetics Center and in 2002, he was instrumental in establishing Akron Children's D. Gary Benfield, MD, Fetal Treatment Center, which he co-directs today.

When he first joined Akron Children's in 1971 as an associate pathologist, the field of genetics was in its infancy. Though some crucial discoveries had been made about DNA and genetics in general, very little was applied to medicine. Dr. Robinson was influential in bringing prenatal testing and chromosomal studies here. In fact, he performed the first chromosome study at Akron Children's on a child with Down syndrome. He also was an early advocate for newborn screening and for performing amniocentesis tests, where he derived amniotic fluid from mothers who questioned whether their babies might have chromosomal abnormalities. He continues to push the envelope on genetic testing and therapies to further advance the field. "Our ultimate goal is to eventually ... come to a point that we here at Children's would be able to provide in-utero therapies that would avoid many of the defects that are currently not treatable before the baby is born," he said. "That's on our agenda right now and it's being developed actually."

Among Dr. Robinson's other achievements are his work in Toledo, Ohio. In 1990, he was recruited to start a genetics program in Toledo. He helped develop a program for the Toledo Museum of Art to study the genetics of mummies that had been stored there for about 70 years. He and his team determined their genders and that they lived 2,000 years ago, among other things. He was also asked by the Toledo Zoo to perform an autopsy on a gorilla that had cerebral palsy.

Dr. Robinson is the Director of Medical Genetics and Genomics at Akron Children's Hospital and is a Professor of Clinical Genetics in Pathology at Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED).