HOW LARGE IS the collection?
Our collection currently fills 5,000 linear feet in a climate-controlled facility on the College’s Queen Lane Campus. It includes millions of documents, diaries, memoranda, correspondence, photographs, textiles, antique medical instruments and other objects. In addition, 30,000 pages of material are accessible online at drexelmed.edu/archives.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER some of the unique or most valuable pieces?
Hahnemann co-founder Constantine Hering’s renowned collection of about 200 volumes written by and about Paracelsus (15th–19th century) describes some of the earliest thinking on homeopathy. We have one of only three such collections in the country. The medicine case of Hannah Longshore, an 1852 graduate of Woman’s Medical College, is also a treasure, along with other similar artifacts.

HOW DO THE COLLECTIONS REFLECT THE STRONG HISTORY of diversity in the College?
Our documents and photos illustrate the struggles of women, and also men from certain ethnic groups, to gain acceptance as physicians. For example, we have records describing Hannah Longshore’s struggle to convince a pharmacist to fill a prescription she wrote because he didn’t consider her a “real” doctor. We also have a collection of newspaper clippings documenting the “jeering incident” of 1869. This occurred when Ann Preston, a graduate and later dean of Woman’s Medical College, brought 34 female students to a clinical lecture amphitheater. At the time, women were not permitted at clinical lectures, and the male students jeered and spat at them. The incident was picked up by newspapers all over the country, almost all of which sided with the women, chastising the male students for their “ungentlemanly behavior.”

WHAT NEW PROJECTS ARE underway at the Legacy Center?
The Legacy Center was awarded over $300,000 in grants from the Heritage Philadelphia Program of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage to develop Doctor or Doctress: Explore American History Through the Eyes of Women Physicians. When the website launches this fall, high school students will conduct their own research in American history by exploring the stories of pioneering medical women. We hope these stories will encourage historically informed civic engagement and inspire young people, especially girls, to pursue careers in science and medicine.

WHAT FELLOWSHIP opportunities are available at the Legacy Center?
We award a four- to six-week fellowship annually, with a $4,000 stipend, to a student who is working toward a publication, film or other project. In addition to helping the student, the Legacy Center benefits when fellows cite our collections in their work.

HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE our alumni to use the collections?
First, I encourage alumni to think about items they have from their medical school days and careers that they might like to donate. This is the right home for alumni documents because we can make them accessible to researchers. We also encourage our alumni to visit. A quick phone call is all it takes to set it up (215.991.8340).