

Q&A

Joanne Murray

The College of Medicine's Legacy Center is a treasure trove for alumni and researchers seeking information about women in medicine, homeopathy and the heritage of the College and its predecessor institutions, Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, MCP, Hahnemann Medical College and Hahnemann University. Joanne Murray, director of the Legacy Center: Archives & Special Collections, reflects on this vast collection and its value.

Jim Greipp

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, memorandums, 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.

WHY ARE ARCHIVES IMPORTANT to our institution?

We have a complex history with many predecessor institutions. It's important to have a clear understanding of each of those institutions, how they came together, what

they're doing now and how all of that has influenced the goals of the institution.

HOW ARE THE COLLEGE'S ARCHIVES IMPORTANT to others?

People all over the world are interested in the history of women, the history of women in medicine and the history of medical education, in which our predecessor institutions played a very big role. The history of homeopathy and the changes that Hahnemann experienced are very reflective of the changes in medicine over time. We have really wonderful artifacts that people use to add to the body of knowledge we have about humankind.

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).