

Spring 2009 Calendar of Events

Chinese Herbal Medicine Exhibit Traveling Exhibit

March 9 - April 13, 2009; Monday-Friday 1-5 pm

This exhibit of Chinese Herbal and Medicinal Plants has travelled to the MHC from the Henan College of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the China Pharmaceutical University School of Traditional Chinese Pharmacy. The exhibit is supported by the Chinese American Association of Central Ohio, the Asian Festival Corp., and the OSU East Asian Studies Center.

Warren Lecture; "Introduction to Chinese Herbal Medicine"

April 2, 2009; 4:00pm reception; 4:30 lecture

This lecture will feature Dr. David Wang of the OSU Center for Integrative Medicine. The travelling exhibit of chinese medical herbs will be open during this evening event and lecture.

"Black Nurses in America: The Paths They Opened"

April 30, 2009; 4:00pm reception; 4:30 lecture

This annual Friends of Nursing History Lecture will be held on April 30, 2009 and will be given by Mary McKelvey, PhD, RN and Mary Ann Burnam, PhD, RN, of Otterbein College.

Visit us on the web at <http://mhc.med.ohio-state.edu/>



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House Call

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Karl P. Klassen, M.D.

by Charles V. Meckstroth, M.D.



Karl P. Klassen, MD

If it is true that surgeons are "different" from their medical colleagues, Karl P. Klassen would be a prime example. Without question, he was the first full time and most respected thoracic surgeon of his time in Central Ohio.

Dr. Klassen was born in SPAT, Crimea, Russia in 1908 where his father was a Mennonite teacher and directed a school for the Royal Family of Russia. Because of political difference, the family with their thirteen children migrated to the United States and Canada in 1925.

He obtained his M.D. from Chicago Medical School in 1936 and after two years of surgical training came to Columbus in 1938 to complete his training under Dr. George M. Curtis in the Department of Research Surgery.

His early surgical work in Columbus included the difficult techniques of tuberculosis surgery with partial lung and lobe resections and the space reduction procedure of thorocoplasty. The correction of funnel chest deformities, patent ductus, coarctation and esophageal atresia was his contribution to the early surgical program at Columbus Children's Hospital.

Dr. Klassen's reputation as a thoracic surgeon was built upon procedures done in several Columbus hospitals. During the early 1950s, due to a bed shortage, Dr. Klassen was assigned only one bed on ward 1B in Starling - Loving Hospital. Therefore his patients were located in Children's, White Cross and Grant Hospital.

The author can well remember in the early 1940s, as a pre-medical student with a free hour, the experience of watching Dr. Klassen in Operating Room A from the amphitheater above in old Starling - Loving Hospital. Before the case he would put a sterile towel over his sterile gloves and talk to the one or more visitors about the pre-op diagnosis and planned surgical procedure. These "clinics" drew the author to the new and challenging specialty of thoracic surgery.

In 1952, Dr. Robert M. Zollinger, Chairman of the Department of Surgery, named him Chief of the new Thoracic Surgery Division, following the illness of Dr. Curtis on December 7, 1951.

His research in thoracic and cardiac diseases was the basis of his numerous articles in surgical journals and earned him a national reputation.

Dr. Klassen brought exhibits of his research and surgical procedures to many national surgical meetings. I have been told that in 1948 his exhibit was two spaces from that of Dr. Charles P. Bailey, who brought to this exhibit the young blonde woman upon whom he had performed the first successful closed mitral valve commissurotomy ten days earlier. After three years of doubt by cardiologists, Dr. Klassen performed this operation at University Hospital in 1951 as the first of a twenty year long series. Because of his childhood and early adult life exposure to the arts, Dr. Klassen was a member of many Columbus art and science societies, including The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts and the Columbus Center of Science and Industry where in the latter he was a member of the Board of Trustees. The author can remember, after a quick lunch downtown, the visits to the Center where Dr. Klassen showed his participation in the production of an early 1900 physician's permanent exhibit.

So many things received his time and interest; family life, roses, architecture, and even a self made electric train display that could be lowered from the ceiling of his basement.

The golf course was another form of relaxation. Nothing got in the way of his 1 o'clock Wednesday afternoon tee time. This probably prepared him for the always torrid Thursday seven A.M. meetings of Dr. Zollinger with the other Division chiefs.

Stained glass was of special interest to Dr. Klassen. At noontime, at national meetings, with camera in hand, we would visit, or in his case revisit the splendid stained glass windows of the city's principal churches. In Columbus, noontime would allow a visit to the Franklin Art Glass Studio in German Village. He participated in the planning of the stained glass mural in Cramblett Hall. His office windows included displays of the seals of the American College of Surgeons and the Columbus Surgical Society.

His dedication to teaching students is evidenced by his award in 1960 of the Student Distinguished Teacher Award.

At the time of his death in May 6 of 1978, Dr. Klassen was survived by his wife Pat, son Peter, daughter Kristina and two grandsons, Peter (P.J.) and Sean Owen.

Above and beyond all of his other attributes and abilities, his trainees remember Dr. Klassen for his surgical techniques. The residents would "fight" to be his assistant on a case but in reality the best way we could assist him was to "stay out of his way."

On one memorable occasion, when the author was a resident, Dr. Klassen was called to scrub in and rescued the author from a surgical problem. I can still remember Dr. Klassen saying, "Charles, watch how I do this. The next time I might not be available."

Have a story idea or suggestion?

Housecall welcomes suggestions for articles as well as article submissions on the topic of health sciences history, particularly in central Ohio.

Suggestion or articles (750 words or less) can be submitted to the editor at: judith.wiener@osumc.edu or to: Judith Wiener, Medical Heritage Center, 376 West 10th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210. Questions about contributions can be sent via e-mail or phone at (614) 292-9273.

The Friends of Nursing History Project at the Medical Heritage Center serves as an important program to collect, preserve, and promote the rich nursing heritage in the central Ohio area. Program coordinator, Carol Robinson, MS, RN, shares the group's progress in the past in the following article.

Update in Nursing History

by Carol Robinson, MS, RN



McKelvey



Burnam

Interviews with Geraldine Price, Grayce Sills and Carol Jenkins are but three of many oral histories that have been collected by nursing steering committee members at the Medical Heritage Center (MHC) as part of the nursing history project. These video interviews preserve the professional experiences of central Ohio nurses who have practiced in a variety of settings, from WWII naval ships to national health care committees, health care clinics and labor and delivery suites. Linda Baas, a former president of the Ohio Nurses Association, is recording the experiences of all former ONA presidents, and Sandy Cornett charted the progress of nursing practice at the OSU Medical Center when she interviewed Peggy Hull, a pioneer in nursing staff development at the hospital.

Archiving nursing artifacts and memorabilia is another part of the nursing history project. Almost 300 nursing books have been collected and reside in the climate controlled stacks at the MHC. These include a first edition of Florence Nightingale's "Notes on Nursing" donated by Dr. James and Gloria Warren. Early nursing textbooks, commentary and biographies are part of the collection as well. Along with books, the nursing collection contains artifacts such as nursing pins, uniforms, caps, capes, albums and year books of student days.

A third element of the nursing project, along with the interviews and artifact collection, is an annual nursing program, held each spring in conjunction with National Nurses' Week. A panel discussion, nurse historian lectures and nursing exhibits have been held in the past. This year's program, to be held on Thursday, April 30, will be a lecture by Mary McKelvey, PhD, RN and Mary Ann Burnam, PhD, RN, both Professors of Nursing at Otterbein College. This lecture will discuss "Black Nurses in America: The Paths They Opened." A reception will be held at 4pm, with the lecture from 4:30-5:30. The lecture is free and open to the public. Donations are always welcomed to help support the nursing history project.

The committee wishes to thank Judith Wiener, Head Curator, and Kristin Rodgers, Collections Curator, for their assistance and support with our projects as we continue to collect and record the history of nursing in central Ohio.