

Spring 2010 Calendar of Events

April 5 to May 5, 2010

Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America's Women Physicians traveling exhibit.

This exhibit was developed by the Exhibition Program of the the History of Medicine Division of the National Library of Medicine in collaboration with the American Library Association Public Programs Office. The traveling exhibition has been made possible by the National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health Office of Research on Women's Health. The American Medical Women's Association provided additional support. Please look to the next issue of *House Call* for more programming information and exhibition hours!

April 29, 2010

The Annual Friends of Nursing History Program will feature Columbus Public Health Commissioner Dr. Teresa C. Long, who will provide a discussion of the rich history of public health nursing in central Ohio. More details will follow regarding this program.

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



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House Call

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House Call

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Arthur Giangiacomo James (1912-2001)

"All cancer will eventually be wiped out; there's no doubt about that. I don't know how long it will take...but I am sure the day is coming."

By George W. Paulson, MD

-- Arthur G. James, MD.



Credit: MHC Arthur G. James, MD Collection

Dr. Arthur G. James is the subject of a book authored by Medical Heritage Center Collections Curator Kristin Rodgers and Dr. George Paulson, published in 2009. The book was possible through the generosity of the James family and the organizational skills and devotion of Ms. Norma Flesher, the long time nurse and secretary of Dr. James. The Arthur G. James, MD, Collection that Rodgers processed is contained in 165 boxes and is one of 70 plus archival collections in the Medical Heritage Center. The book thus rests on the shoulders of donors, work of the MHC staff, and remembrance of Dr. James' friends. Who was Dr. James and why should he be remembered?

Dr. James was the third of nine children in an immigrant Italian family who lived in southeastern Ohio. He attended OSU after he received the OSU scholarship as valedictorian of the St. Clairsville class of 1930. In medical school at Ohio State he performed research on iodine metabolism under the direction of Dr. George Curtis, chairman of the Department of Experimental Surgery. James also came to admire Dr. Verne Dodd, who was then the chairman of the Department of Surgery. After graduation in 1937, mixed internship at the University of Chicago, a surgical internship at Duke, and a residency in surgery at Ohio State, James began an oncology fellowship at Memorial Hospital in New York. As World War II began he volunteered to join the 65th Army Hospital which had been formed at Duke. At the time the war began, there was no comparable medical unit from The Ohio State University.

James later stated that the 44 months spent serving as surgeon in a tent hospital, and receiving casualties of the American 10th Air Force, was "equal to 15 years of surgical practice." After he was demobilized, he returned to complete the fellowship at Memorial, and while there served with multiple mentors. Among his teachers were Drs. George Pack and James Ewing, the latter once pictured on the cover of the magazine *Time* as "Mr. Cancer."

James had married Mildred Cameron of Columbus while in residency, despite insistence of administrators that any resident must remain unmarried. A son, David, was born while James served overseas, and David and later son Cameron Dodd James, were delivered by Dr. Charles Pavey, well known to most readers of the *House Call*. When he returned to Columbus, James became recognized as the major cancer surgeon of central Ohio, but it was a time many physicians doubted any need for oncological surgery as a sub-specialty. James was joined for a decade by Dr. Joseph Bonta, also a product of the fellowship program at Memorial Hospital, and for years both were in private practice, not primarily salaried employees of Ohio State. James, reflecting his earlier research with Curtis, specialized in surgical diseases of the thyroid, and soon completely limited himself to surgery for cancerous diseases.

James had a locally-publicized disagreement with Dr. George Crile, Jr., of Cleveland over the optimal surgical approach for removal of breast cancer. James was a major proponent of radical removal of the tumor and surrounding tissues, Crile usually settled for less. There was later concern about surgery James performed on prisoners to implant cancer cells under the skin. This work was done before the day of human subjects committees, with the goal to determine if the immune system of a normal person would prevent growth of cancer cells. James role was just as the physician who removed any lumps that appeared at the site of insertion. He was exceptionally busy, respected highly in Ohio, and active in educational efforts for the community and for the medical students.

Because of his extensive experience at Memorial, James felt qualified to perform difficult surgery, including the radical “commando” procedure in cases of parotid or oral cancer, and hemipelvectomy for pelvic tumors. The commando procedure included removal of the mandible and much of the tongue as part of radical neck dissection. He frequently called his mentors in New York, and aware of a need for colleagues he soon wished for a cancer hospital in central Ohio.

Dr. Charles Doan had been the medical leader of the Columbus Cancer Clinic and he passed that duty on to James. For the next three decades James led dozens of volunteers at the clinic. This was the era when chemotherapy was becoming standard, new surgical techniques were being developed, and oncology was born as a specialty within organized medicine. The many volunteers at the Clinic helped in the push for a cancer hospital.

James experienced multiple failed attempts to get funds or sufficient community support to build the cancer hospital, a dream when there were cancer hospitals only at MD Anderson in Texas, Memorial in New York City, and one at Roswell Park, in Buffalo, New York. Attempts by James to link the projected cancer hospital with Riverside Methodist Hospital led to extensive plans, but no hospital. Requests for support from the Columbus Academy of Medicine led to rejection, and similar efforts to raise enough funds through the Columbus Cancer Clinic failed. When he approached the administration of The Ohio State University Medical Center (OSUMC) they began their own independent plans for a separate cancer hospital.

A crucial event was the offer in 1976 from Dr. Larry Carey, chair of the Department of Surgery, to James to join the full-time surgical staff and establish an oncology division. James had worked in multiple community hospitals, and some questioned his loyalty to OSUMC. No one questioned his desire to facilitate the construction of a hospital limited to cancer, however, nor the concept that if there was such a hospital it should be dedicated to both patient care and research. They just doubted it was needed or, if it was to be built, then not necessarily at OSU, and not separate from the main hospital. Within a year of his full time appointment James had obtained the first American Cancer Society Fellowship to support training. The Oncology Division of the Department of Surgery was launched and the efforts for the cancer hospital snow-balled.

The renewed impetus related to the fact that James brought more than his share of strengths to the surgical program at OSUMC. He was president of the American Cancer Society, and its principle spokesperson, and he had testified before congress on behalf of cancer research and teaching. He was the cherished surgeon for many of the successful people of Columbus, and for their families. He was often quoted in the Columbus Dispatch. Its editor was a firm supporter of the dream of a hospital, and of James personally. James’ manner contributed to his positive image. He was soft spoken, attentive, dignified, and very conscientious about patient care. He would give a talk to any group that requested it—always ending with a plea for the hospital. In addition, he was a skillful surgeon and was chosen outstanding teacher by the

residents.

The rest of the story is obvious. Despite much resistance, he did get the hospital built and assured that even as part of the university it would remain autonomous in many areas. Others, including Deans Cramblett and Tzagournis, were particularly helpful in arranging a DRG exemption, which allowed longer stays than was typical in general hospitals. DRG means Diagnosis-Related Groups, one of the criteria used to determine how much Medicare will pay for various procedures. The cancer hospital qualified on the basis of its clear focus, sustained research, and full time staff. There were setbacks in the move toward a hospital devoted solely to cancer, of course, including rupture of a water main on an exceptionally cold night and subsequent flooding of the building before opening, an event James referred to as “the Baptism.” There even remained residual uncertainty about the relationship with the general Ohio State University Hospital, and the dance to preserve both linkage and autonomy has not always been graceful.

James was president of several of the surgical organizations involved with cancer and received many awards. He may have been particularly pleased to get the Horatio Alger award, one that honors a person who succeeds despite apparently limited prospects earlier in life. He was nominated for this by many of his prominent friends including David Thomas of Wendy’s, Governor James Rhodes, Dean Jeffers of Nationwide Insurance, congressmen, and other successful citizens. James always had an interest in research and teaching, and his publications were substantial, but he will be largely remembered, and remains honored, for his leadership in stimulating creation of the Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute.

Reference: Paulson, G. and Rodgers, K. Arthur G. James: Surgeon with a Dream. James Property Management, Ltd, LLC, 2009.



James Book Available for Sale at the MHC

The book, Arthur G. James: Surgeon With A Dream by George W. Paulson, MD and Kristin R. Rodgers, MLIS, is available for sale for \$25 through the Medical Heritage Center.

An order form is available on the Medical Heritage Center Website at: <http://mhc.med.ohio-state.edu/11500.cfm> or contact Kristin Rodgers at (614) 292-9966 or kristin.rodgers@osumc.edu for ordering information.

Recent Donations

The MHC would like to thank the following donors for their generosity:

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