

William Harris Papers
Ca. 1919-1977
MC42

Size: 0.75 c.f. (1 oversize manuscript box)
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Processed: 2016 and 2017
By Jeff Mifflin and Lucy Ross

ACQUISITION: Given to the Archives by William Harris, MD, in January 2012. Additional video files given to the Archives by Sarah Alger, Director of the Paul S. Russell Museum of Medical History and Innovation at MGH.

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Biographical Note

William H. Harris, M.D., D.Sc., is an orthopaedic surgeon. He was Chief of the Adult Reconstructive Surgery and Director of the Harris Orthopedic Laboratory at the Massachusetts General Hospital. He has been Clinical Professor of Orthopedic Surgery at Harvard Medical School since 1974. Much of his research has focused over the years on osteolysis, the deterioration of bone tissue around joint replacement implants, and developing cross-linked polyethylene to counter osteolysis.

Harris received a BS from Haverford College in 1947 and an MD from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in 1951. He interned at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and completed one year of residency in general surgery there. His orthopedic training was at the Boston Children's Hospital and the MGH.

Harris performed one of the first femoral head autograft procedures, as well as one of the first femoral head allograft procedures: two techniques that are now widely used. Along with his research staff at the MGH he was the first to centrifuge cement. The "Total System," introduced in 1983, designed by Harris, was the first integrated system offering an entire range of cemented and cementless implants. He was one of the two designers who created the first successful cementless acetabular component. This was the first time that screws were put through the component to fix it to the skeleton. He is also the designer of one of the most successful long-term cemented femoral components. The "Harris Hip Score" developed by him rates a patient's progress relating to pain and function after surgery.

Harris is a founding member of The Hip Society of North America and served as the organization's first president. He went on to be a founding member and president of the International Hip Society. The Hip Society granted Dr. Harris a record ten honorary awards for outstanding contributions to hip surgery, and he won the Kappa Delta Award of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery (twice) for outstanding orthopedic research. Dr. Harris is the author of some 520 scientific publications and three textbooks dealing with hip surgery, arthritis and diseases of the skeleton. For additional details, please visit the website www.williamhharris.technoir.net.

Contents Note

The contents include one "scrapbook" (unbound during processing) pertaining to Ward I procedures, techniques, regulations, charts related to treatment of joints. The "I" in ward I is the letter "I", not the number 1.

The videos include a brief lecture on a procedure, followed by surgical video with explanatory voiceover. Both Howmedica Inc and the Howmet Corporation of Rutherford New Jersey are thanked in the credits. Photography for both films is credited to Stan Bennett.

Processing Note

The original binder of the scrapbook was badly deteriorated and rusted. It was discarded, and the contents were placed in their original order into acid-neutral folders. Mylar sleeves were used to protect fragile materials, and some rusted paper clips were removed. Many of the documents show signs of being soiled or dingy. The documents could benefit at some future date from a professional cleaning.

The videos originally came into the Archives as files saved on USB flash drives. While the two drives are included, the files were backed up onto 2 DVDs per video.

Folder List:

b. 1

Videos

Lateral Appro. For VCA [ca. 1977]

A New Replaceable Total Hip Implant [ca. 1977]

Ward I Scrapbook [1 of 4] [ca. 1919-1935]

Ward I Scrapbook [2 of 4] [ca. 1919-1920]

Ward I Scrapbook [3 of 4] [ca. 1919-1920]

Ward I Scrapbook [4 of 4] [ca. 1919-1953]