Finding Aid To

THE JOSEPH HINSEY, PHD (1901-1981) PAPERS

Dates of Papers:
1914-1980

65 Linear Inches
(13 Boxes)

Finding Aid Prepared By:
Stephen Novak
Assistant Archivist
Undated

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Provenance

This collection was received by the Medical Archives from Mrs. Hinsey and Dr. Hinsey's son, Joseph on March 24, 1982. A Memorandum of Accession can be found with this Register.

Biographical Note

Dr. Joseph Clarence Hinsey was born in Ottumwa, Iowa on April 29, 1901, the son of Joseph E. and Sarah Majors Hinsey and the grandson of a pioneer Iowa physician and surgeon.

After two years at Iowa Wesleyan College, Dr. Hinsey transferred to Northwestern University where a teacher, Dr. William Albert Locy, persuaded him to change his career plans from medicine to biology. Dr. Hinsey received his B.S. with highest honors in 1922 and his M.S. in 1923. He then continued his graduate studies in neuroanatomy at Washington University where he studied under S. Walter Ranson and two future Nobel Laureates, Herbert Gasser and Joseph Erlanger.

After receiving his Ph.D. in 1927, Dr. Hinsey taught at Washington, Northwestern and Stanford Universities before succeeding Herbert Gasser in 1936 as Professor of Physiology and Chairman of the Department at Cornell University Medical College. His rise thereafter at CUMC was swift. He moved from Physiology to become Professor of Anatomy and Chairman of that Department in 1939 and two years later succeeded William Ladd as Dean of CUMC.

During his tenure as Dean (1941-1953), Dr. Hinsey coped with the stresses of the Second World War on the College as well as guiding it to increased prestige as one of the leading medical schools in the U.S. He encouraged Dr. George N. Papanicolaou in the research that would lead to the "Pap Test." He supported the Crash Injury Research Project under the guidance of Hugh DeHaven. He was instrumental in getting the Olin Foundation to support the construction of CUMC's first permanent student dormitory, Olin Hall.

From 1953 to 1966, Dr. Hinsey was Director of the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center. As director he was responsible for coordinating the policies of the Hospital, Medical School and School of Nursing "so as to promote harmonious and effective cooperation in teaching, research and the care of patients."

Dr. Hinsey was an active spokesman for American medical education and health care. He was a founder of the Association of American Medical Colleges and served as its President (1950) and Executive Council Chairman (1947-1953). He was also among the founding members of the National Fund for Medical Education; a Commissioner on the President's Commission on the Health Needs of the Nation (1952); and the long-time Chairman of the China Medical Board.
Biographical Note (cont)

(1956-1971).

After retiring from the Medical Center, Dr. Hinsey remained an active figure in biomedical education. He wrote profusely, gave numerous addresses and was always present at NYH-CMC functions.

He married Sarah (Sally) Callen in 1926 and was the father of two children. He died March 25, 1981.

Scope and Content

The Hinsey Papers reflect many of the activities of Joseph Hinsey as educator, administrator and tireless advocate of America’s medical schools. The bulk of the collection is from 1951 to 1980, from the time Dr. Hinsey was Dean of CUMC, through his years as Director of the Medical Center, into his active retirement. Although supposedly the personal papers of Dr. Hinsey, the collection contains much created in his official capacity as dean and director.

The largest parts of the collection are Hinsey's speeches and correspondence. The addresses cover the years 1951-1969, were generally delivered at medical school commencements, hospital dedications and professional association meetings, and reveal a good deal of the assumptions, aspirations and rhetoric of the U.S. medical education community in the 1950s and '60s. The correspondence dating from 1951 to 1980 (with a gap, 1970-1974) contains both in-coming and out-going letters. In the early years it is heavily official in character; after 1975 Dr. Hinsey's letters are generally personal and are filled with reminiscences of his career.

There is much here on Dr. Hinsey's involvement with the National Fund for Medical Education, 1948-1969 (8:8-11; 9:1-2) and with the China Medical Board, including minutes, correspondence and annual reports (Box 6). Dr. Hinsey's activities as a fundraiser can be seen in these files as well as in his correspondence with Charles Horn of the Olin Foundation.

His "Recollections About the Neurological Sciences with Emphasis on Neuroendocrinology" recounts his days as graduate student and researcher in the 1920s and '30s working with Ranson, Gasser and Erlanger (13:5).

There is also information on Dr. George N. Papanicolaou and the Cytology Department (9:9; 12:1); the construction of Olin Hall; and the Crash Injury Research Project. A 1956 letter from G. Canby Robinson recounts Robinson's plans for the Medical Center in the 1930s and compliments Hinsey on the job he is doing.
These papers should be used in conjunction with other collections, particularly the records of the Office of the Dean and of the Office of the President, NYH-CMC. There are no restrictions on the collection.

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f.8 National Advisory Committee on Long Range Planning for the Division of Health Affairs at Univ. of North Carolina - corresp., notes, report, Jan 1954 -May 1958
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