

Archives & Special Collections, Columbia University Health Sciences Library

Alfred Jaretzki Papers

JARETZKI, ALFRED, 1919-2014.

Alfred Jaretzki papers, 1948-2009.

1.5 cubic feet (5 boxes)

M-0103

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Alfred Jaretzki III was born in Greenwich, Connecticut on August 11, 1919. He attended Harvard College (AB 1941) and Harvard Medical School (MD 1944). Jaretzki began his career at Presbyterian Hospital in New York City as a Surgical Intern (1944-1948) and Resident (July 1948-June 1954). He had a career as a cardiothoracic surgeon in the Department of Surgery at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University; and at Presbyterian, Mary Imogene Bassett (MIBH), Bellevue, Delafield, and Harlem Hospitals.

Jaretzki collaborated with neurologists in the study and treatment of myasthenia gravis, a chronic autoimmune disease marked by muscular weakness. He wrote extensively about surgical thymectomy in treating the disease, advancing knowledge of thymus anatomy. Also noteworthy are his contributions in the field of vascular surgery in collaboration with Arthur Voorhees, with whom he worked in the bridging of arterial gaps in dogs with flexible tubes made from synthetic mesh.

Jaretzki was a member of the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America's Medical/Scientific Advisory Board. After publishing "Death with Dignity—Passive Euthanasia. Guide to Physician Dealing with Dying Patients," in the *New York State Journal of Medicine* (April 1976), Jaretzki joined the Board of Directors of Concern for Dying, a group supporting the practice of assisted suicide.

He also co-authored with Frederic P. Herter and Kenneth A. Forde, *A Proud Heritage: An Informal History of Surgery at Columbia* ([New York, N.Y.] : John Jones Surgical Society, 2003).

In 1992, Jaretzki retired and was named Professor Emeritus of Clinical Surgery, Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. He died at the age of 94 on May 29, 2014.

Appointments:

College of Physicians & Surgeons Department of Surgery	Instructor	1954/55
Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital (MIBH)	Instructor	1955/56
College of Physicians & Surgeons Department of Surgery	Associate	1956/57

	Assistant Clinical Professor	1957/58-1961/62
	Associate Clinical Professor	1962/63-1964/65
Bellevue Hospital	Associate Clinical Professor	1965/66-1966/67
College of Physicians & Surgeons Department of Surgery	Associate Clinical Professor	1967/68-1978/79
	Associate Professor of Clinical Surgery	1979/80-
Presbyterian Hospital	Intern Surgeon	Oct 1, 1944-June 30, 1945 July 15, 1947-June 30, 1948
	Assistant Resident Surgeon	July 1, 1948-April 30, 1952
	Assistant Surgeon	July 1, 1954-Dec 31, 1954
	Associate Attending Surgeon	1965/66-1985/86
Delafield Hospital	Associate Visiting Surgeon	July 1, 1965 January 1, 1966 January 1, 1967
Bellevue Hospital	1 st Surgical Division Associate Visiting Surgeon	July 1, 1965 Jan 1, 1966 Jan 1, 1967-June 30 1967
	Chest Service Associate Visiting Surgeon	July 1, 1967-June 30, 1967
Harlem Hospital	Consulting Surgeon	July 1, 1967-Dec 31, 1968

Sources used:

"Concern for Dying Papers" [Finding aid]. RBSCP, University of Rochester, rbscp.lib.rochester.edu/3129. Accessed 11 Sept. 2017.

Jaretzki, Alfred, "Curriculum Vitae." Archives & Special Collections, Columbia University Health Sciences Library.

Jaretzki, Alfred [Index card]. *Central Records of the Office of the Vice President for Health Sciens/Dean of the Faculty of Medicine*. Archives & Special Collections, Columbia University Health Sciences Library.

Wolfe, Gil I. and Rowland, Lewis P. *In Memoriam: Alfred Jaretzki III, MD*

[HTTP://WWW.MYASTHENIA.ORG/LINKCLICK.ASPX?FILETICKET=RY2FspT5WY%3D&TABID=40](http://www.myasthenia.org/linkclick.aspx?fileticket=RY2FspT5WY%3D&tabid=40)

SCOPE & CONTENT: Correspondence, patient records, notes, drawings, grant application, and writings in both manuscript and printed forms, and photographs and slides document Jaretzki's career as a surgeon at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. One videocassette *Transcervical-transsternal maximal thymectomy for myasthenia gravis (surgical technique)* has accompanying correspondence. Writings are authored by Jaretzki, although the bulk have co-authors.

The patient records include one folder containing records for patients #35-130 arranged in numerical order, and are comprised of Presbyterian Hospital surgical procedure forms with drawings, as well as “surgical pathology” forms containing clinical information. Most of the records document trans-cervical and trans-sternal thymectomies for treatment of myasthenia gravis. Other folders contain patient records as arranged by Jaretzki.

The papers also include one folder of drawings, some airbrushed or reproduced as photographs, and used in Jaretzki’s writings. The bulk depict the anatomy of the thymus. Slides and prints depict experiments involving septal defects and aortic grafts. Approximately 31 lecture slides are glass plates. A grant application includes a DVD regarding thymectomy.

ARRANGEMENT/ORGANIZATION: Arranged alphabetically at folder-level.

LANGUAGE: In English

ACCESS: Because the papers include Confidential Health Information (CHI) as defined by Columbia University policies governing data security and privacy, access is allowed only under the terms of Archives and Special Collections’ [Access Policy to Records Containing Confidential Health Information](#).

Digitized version available of video: *Transcervical-transsternal maximal thymectomy for myasthenia gravis*.

Columbia University records are closed to researchers for 25 years from date of creation.

PROVENANCE: Gift of his wife, Alexandra Isles, 2017-2018 (accessions 2017.024, 2018.039).

PROCESSING NOTE:

Processed by Jennifer Ulrich, September 2017, revised December 2020.

SUBJECTS

Columbia University. Department of Surgery.

Presbyterian Hospital (New York, N.Y.)

Myasthenia gravis.

Thymectomy.

Medical records.

Scientific illustrations (images)

Videocassettes.

Surgeons.

1.5 cubic feet (5 boxes)

Container List

Box	Folder	Title
1	1	Biographical, 1993-2009
1	2-3	Grant application: Thymectomy in Non-Thymomatous MG Patients on Prednison, to NIH. From Department of Biostatistics, School of Public Health, University of Alabama at Birmingham, 2004
1	4	Myasthenia gravis data, 1988
1	5	Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America, Inc., standards, circa 1997-2000
1	6	<i>The Neurologist</i> journal correspondence, 2000-2003
1	7-8	Patient records, #35-130, 1978-1984
2	1	Patient records: additional cases, 1955-1985
2	2	Patient records: additional cases, 1955-1985
2	3-4	Patient records and surgical technique notes, 1948-1970
2	5	Patient records: "Myasthenia Gravis," 1977-1981
2	6	Professional organizations proceedings, 1975-1996
2	7	Videocassette: <i>Transcervical-transsternal maximal thymectomy for myasthenia gravis</i> (surgical technique) 13 minutes, 1989
3	1	Writings: "The Case against cervical thymectomy," presented at the American Neurological Association, October 4, 1978
3	2	Writings: "Congenital bronchopulmonary-Foregut malformation..." <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i> , v.278, reprint, June 1968
3	3	Writings: "CT findings in transdiaphragmatic empyema necessitatis due to tuberculosis" manuscript and reprint, circa 1987
3	4	Writings: "Cystosarcoma phyllodes: report of an unusual case, with death due to intraneural extension to the central nervous system," manuscript and reprint, 1985
3	5	Writings: "Death with dignity-passive euthanasia," <i>New York State Journal of Medicine</i> , v. 76.4, reprint, April 1976
3	6	Writings: "An evaluation of radioactive iodine therapy in metastatic thyroid cancer," <i>Journal of Clinical Endocrinology</i> , v.10, n.9, reprint, September 1950
3	7	Writings: "Granulomatous esophagitis," <i>Gastroenterology</i> , v. 64, reprint, 1973
3	8	Writings: "Homografts of bone marrow in dogs after lethal total-body radiation," reprints, 1958-1959
3	9	Writings: Hypoprothrombinemia and vitamin K, 1952-1953
3	10	Writings: Illustrations, 1980s-2002
3	11	Writings: "Massive lipoma of heart," manuscript and reprint, 1978
3	12	Writings: Myasthenia gravis, circa 1975-1983
3	13	Writings: "Pectus excavatum," 1974, 1980

3	14	Writings: "A pilot project in molecular cancer epidemiology: determination of benz[a]pyrene-DNA adducts in animal and human tissues by immunoassays," <i>Carcinogenesis</i> , v.3, n. 12 reprint, 1982
3	15	Writings: "Preparation of the patient and family for major surgery," manuscript, Symposium on Human and Ethical Issues in Surgery, 1984
3	16	Writings: <i>A proud heritage: an informal history of surgery at Columbia</i> ([New York, N.Y.] : John Jones Surgical Society, 2003), signed copy
3	17	Writings: "Pulmonary lymphangiomyomatosis," presented at the 74th Annual meeting of the American Roentgen Ray Society, September 25-28, 1973
3	18	Writings: "Resection of giant benign fibrous mesothelioma of pleura," <i>New York State Journal of Medicine</i> , v.70, n.4, reprint, March 1980
3	19	Writings: "Surgical significance of spontaneous intra-abdominal hemorrhage," <i>Surgical Clinics of North America</i> v.40, n.4, reprint, August 1960
3	20	Writings: "Systemic supply to a pulmonary arteriovenous malformation..." <i>AJR</i> [American Journal of Roentgenology?] v.145, reprint, October 1985
3	21	Writings: "Technique for the demonstration of ischemic areas of the heart at operation," <i>Surgery</i> v.61, n.4, reprint, April 1967
3	22	Writings: "Thrombosis of the abdominal aorta," <i>Archives of Surgery</i> , v.96, reprint, January 1968
3	23	Writings: "Thymic abnormalities: antigen or antibody? Response to thymectomy in myasthenia gravis," circa 1980
3	24	Writings: Thymectomy and myasthenia gravis, 1978-1997
4	1	
4	2	Writings: Thymectomy and myasthenia gravis--Journals, 1989-2003
4	3	Writings: Thymectomy and myasthenia gravis, 1990-2008
4	4	Writings: "Use of tubes constructed from Vinyon 'N' cloth in bridging arterial defects," reprints, 1951-1952
4	5	Writngs: General, 1977-1995
4	6	Photographs: Septal defect experiement
4	7	Slides, circa 1950s-1980s
5		