



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the George Edward Burch Papers

NMAH.AC.0316

Don Darroch

1988

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	George Edward Burch Papers
Date:	1984-1986
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0316
Creator:	Burch, George Edward, Dr., 1910-1986 (physician)
Source:	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Science, Technology, and Culture
Extent:	0.6 Cubic feet (2 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Papers of Dr. George Edward Burch (1910-1986) researcher in cardiovascular issues and illnesses.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by George Edward Burch and Vivian Burch, 1988.

Provenance

Transferred from the Division of Science, Technology, and Culture to the Archives Center on October 4, 1988.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Don Darroch, 1988.

Preferred Citation

George Edward Burch Papers, 1984-1986, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Dr. George Edward Burch (1910-1986), a native of Louisiana, was the oldest of 8 children born to a general practitioner in a small farming community. He took his university training and medical degree at Tulane,

graduating in 1933. Following post graduate work at Charity Hospital in New Orleans and at Rockefeller Institute, in 1947 he became Henderson Professor and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at Tulane. He held this position until 1975 when he retired and became Emeritus Henderson Professor of Medicine. An authority in clinical cardiology, Dr. Burch was a prolific writer in his field authoring or co authoring 12 books and more than 800 published articles over a 50 year period. He did important and innovative research on many aspects of the cardiovascular system, devising his own apparatus for clinical studies when necessary. He had the first AEC license to use radioisotopes on people and worked closely with the National Bureau of Standards to establish safe levels for their use. He did ground breaking experimental work on the role of viruses in causing cardiovascular diseases. At Tulane, the medical department flourished under his leadership and he served as editor in chief of the American Heart Journal, 1959 1980.

Dr. Burch died at home one day after experiencing a myocardial infarction and refusing to be hospitalized, thus fulfilling his own earlier stated preference to "die fast and die at home."

Scope and Contents

These papers mainly comprise technical notes, diagrams and correspondence relating to and records of laboratory performance of the "two pump heart model". The notes cover the period 1984 1986 and seem to at least in part reflect work of J. Ralph Millet, presumably a technician in Dr. Burch's laboratory. Mr Millet signed the correspondence sent from the lab. Also included are photographs (prints and negatives) of the artificial heart apparatus. A file of reprints of articles from professional journals relating to heart function includes both U.S. and foreign sources.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Cardiology
- Cardiovascular system
- Heart pump
- Heart, Artificial
- Medical sciences
- Medicine -- Research
- Physicians

Types of Materials:

- Medical notes
- Photographic prints

Names:

- National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Science, Technology, and Culture
- Tulane University

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	2 Pump Heart Model: photographs and notes
Box 1, Folder 2	2 Pump Heart Model: notes, drawings, graphs, reprints
Box 1, Folder 3	2 Pump Heart Model: rough diagrams, notes, correspondence
Box 1, Folder 4	Pump Heart Model: graphs before, 1984-11-27 - 1984-11-27
Box 1, Folder 5	2 Pump Heart Model: graphs, 1984-11-27 - 1985-01-07
Box 1, Folder 6	2 Pump Heart Model: graphs, 1985-01-08 - 1985-01-15
Box 2, Folder 1	The 2 Pumps (references)
Box 2, Folder 2	2 Pump Heart Model: Notebook No. 1, 1984-03-15 - 1986-02-26
Box 2, Folder 2	Notebook No. 2, 1986-03-13 - 1986-03-13
Box 2, Folder 3	2 Pump Heart (with round glass "P" and "S" tanks after, 1985-01-18 - 1985-01-18)
Box 2, Folder 4	Component catalogues, correspondence