



Smithsonian

*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Guide to the David Vetter Collection

NMAH.AC.1133

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	David Vetter Collection
<b>Date:</b>	1971-1986
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.1133
<b>Creator:</b>	Vetter, David, 1971-1984 Texas Children's Hospital United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
<b>Source:</b>	Vetter, David J., Jr. (Donor) Vetter, Carol Ann (Donor) National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Science, Medicine, and Society (Collector)
<b>Extent:</b>	4.6 Cubic feet (9 boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Papers document David Vetter, a Texas boy with a rare disease known as Severe Combined Immune Deficiency. His life in a special isolation unit received widespread publicity.
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): David Vetter Collection</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

The collection was donated by David Vetter's parents, David and Carol Ann Vetter in 1986.

### Provenance

Collection transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Science, Medicine and Society (now Division of Medicine and Science) in 2007.

### Related Materials

#### **Materials in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History**

Shriners Hospital Patient Isolation Unit Records, NMAH.AC.1142

#### **Materials in the Division of Medicine and Science, National Museum of American History**

Related objects include action figure toys, a t-shirt, and a space suit. See accessions: 1986.0201 and 1986.0450.

### Processing Information

Collection processed by Eric Ross, intern and Andrea Bishop, intern, 2018.

## Preferred Citation

David Vetter Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

## Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Some health-related materials in Series 3: Medical Publications, Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records, and Series 7: Photographs are restricted until 2034. Contact the Archives Center for information at [archivescenter@si.edu](mailto:archivescenter@si.edu) or 202-633-3270.

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Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

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## Biographical / Historical

David Vetter (1971-1984) was a Texas boy who was born with Severe Combined Immune Deficiency, a disease which required him to live in a sterile, plastic isolation unit. NASA scientists designed and created a special suit for David, which resembled astronauts' space suits. His parents, family, church, doctors, and community all made efforts to enable him to have a normal childhood and life. At age 12, he underwent experimental bone marrow surgery, which was not successful, and David died a few months later. The bone marrow donor, David's sister Katherine, carried a dormant strand of the Epstein-Barr virus which was not detected by the pre-operation screens. He was removed from the bubble in February of 1984 and died 15 days later.

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## Scope and Contents

Papers relating to David Vetter, a Texas boy with a rare disease known as Severe Combined Immune Deficiency. The papers document his and his family's efforts to maintain normalcy in his life in spite of the limitations imposed by his disease, and medical efforts to reduce or cope with the limitations. A special suit was designed for David by NASA scientists to give him mobility, and the papers include documentation of the development and implementation of the suit.

The collection includes letters, greeting cards, photographs, medical records and internal hospital memoranda and documents from the Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, procedure manuals for the isolation unit, specifications for the space suit, David's school records and school art projects, receipts and other financial papers, trade literature for products used in creating the sterile isolation unit, medical journals, newspaper and magazine articles, and clippings. The collection also includes a project created by high school students in 1985 about David's life and legislation to honor David with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into seven series.

Series 1: Correspondence and Press, 1971-1985

Series 2: Mobile Biological Isolation System (MBIS), 1973-1983

Series 3: Medical Publications, 1972-1983

Series 4: Personal Papers, 1978-1983

Series 5: Nimitz High School Project, 1985

Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records, 1965-1989

Series 7: Photographs, 1974-1983

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

- Greeting cards -- 20th century
- Hospitals
- Immune diseases
- Immunological deficiency syndromes
- Isolation (Hospital care)
- Severe combined immunodeficiency
- Space suits

### Types of Materials:

- Articles -- 20th century
- Correspondence -- 20th century
- Financial records -- 20th century
- Legislative documents
- Manuals
- Periodicals
- Photographs -- 20th century
- Reports -- 1950-1980
- Reprints
- School records
- Specifications
- Student drawings
- Trade literature

### Names:

- National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Science, Medicine, and Society
- Vetter, Carol Ann
- Vetter, David J., Jr.

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Correspondence and Press, 1971-1985

Box 1, Folder 1	<a href="#">Correspondence from the Public, 1971-1974</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	David Vetter Bibliography, 1977
Box 1, Folder 3	Press Release (Death), 1985
Box 1, Folder 4	Fact Sheets for Press Release, 1973-1978
Box 1, Folder 5	House Resolution 451, 1984
Box 1, Folder 6	People Magazine, 1984
Box 1, Folder 7	Press Clips, 1974-1984
Box 1, Folder 8	Press Clips , 1974-1984
Box 1, Folder 9	Publicity Reports, 1974-1984
Box 1, Folder 10	Media Relations, 1974-1980
Box 2, Folder 1	News Articles, 1971-1983
Box 2, Folder 2	Release of Information Forms, signed, 1977-1979

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## Series 2: Mobile Biological Isolation System (MBIS), 1973-1983

Box 2, Folder 3	Administrative Review of the Mobile Biological Isolation System, 1975
Box 2, Folder 4	Laminar Flow Patient Isolation Systems, 1983
Box 2, Folder 5	MBIS Operating Procedures and Maintenance Manual, 1976-1977
Box 2, Folder 6	MBIS Operating Procedures and Maintenance Manual, 1976
Box 2, Folder 7	MBIS Operating Procedures and Maintenance Manual, 1976
Box 2, Folder 8	MBIS Program Plan, 1974
Box 2, Folder 9	Press Packet, 1977
Box 2, Folder 10	Procedure Manual: Gnotobiotic Isolation System, 1983
Box 3, Folder 1	Protocol for Laminar Airflow Rooms, 1983
Box 3, Folder 2	Severe Combined Immune Deficiency Disease, References, 1973-1977
Box 3, Folder 3	Space Suit, 1975-1978
Box 3, Folder 4	Space Suit Protocol, 1977-1978
Box 3, Folder 5	Special Report: Four year study, 1977
Box 3, Folder 6	Supplies, Commercial Orders, Expenses, undated
Box 8, Folder 1	Gnotobiotic Isolation System Procedure Manual, 1980-1983
Box 8, Folder 2	Gnotobiotic Isolation System Procedure Manual, 1980-1983
Box 9, Folder 2	Gnotobiotic Isolation System - Diagram, undated

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## Series 3: Medical Publications, 1972-1983

Box 3, Folder 7	David Vetter: Reports and Manuscripts, 1975
Box 3, Folder 8	Gnotobiotic Care, 1973-1978
Box 3, Folder 9	Immunology, 1972-1983
Box 3, Folder 10	Microbiology, 1973-1978
Box 4, Folder 1	Mental, Physical, Psycho-social Development, 1973-1977
Box 4, Folder 2	Professional Papers and Background Information, 1975
Box 4, Folder 3	Psychiatric Studies, 1975-1976
Box 4, Folder 4	Radiology, 1972-1975 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 3: Medical Publications are restricted until 2034.
Box 4, Folder 5	Seminar, 1974 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 3: Medical Publications are restricted until 2034.
Box 4, Folder 6	Severe Combined Immune Deficiency Monograph for Pediatric Research, 1977
Box 4, Folder 7	Severe Combined Immune Deficiency Monograph - Original Manuscript, 1976
Box 4, Folder 8	Speech and Language, 1975
Box 4, Folder 9	Skin Graft, 1972

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## Series 4: Personal Papers, 1978-1983

Box 4, Folder 10	Cards, undated
Box 4, Folder 11	Drawings, undated
Box 4, Folder 12	School, 1978-1983
Box 4, Folder 13	School, 1983
Box 9, Folder 1	Art Project, undated

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## Series 5: Nimitz High School Project, 1985

Box 4, Folder 14	<a href="#">Nimitz High School Sophomore Group Project - Photos, 1985</a>
Box 5, Folder 1	Nimitz High School Sophomore Group Project, 1985
Box 5, Folder 2	Nimitz High School Sophomore Group Project - News Clippings, 1985
Box 5, Folder 3	Nimitz High School Sophomore Group Project - Poster Materials, 1985
Box 5, Folder 4	Nimitz High School Sophomore Group Project - Signs, 1985

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## Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records, 1965-1989

Box 5, Folder 5	Administrative Aspects - Budget, 1974-1978
Box 5, Folder 6	Archival Material, 1989
Box 5, Folder 7	Bette Robertson, 1977-1980
Box 5, Folder 8	Blank Forms, undated
Box 5, Folder 9	Care Plan, 1979-1980 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.
Box 5, Folder 10	CDP Meetings, 1978-1983 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.
Box 5, Folder 11	Checklist of Required Skills of CRC Nurses, 1978-1981
Box 5, Folder 12	Child Development, 1980
Box 5, Folder 13	Communication Meetings, 1980
Box 5, Folder 14	Culture Reports, 1983 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.
Box 5, Folder 15	Culture Reports, 1984 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.
Box 5, Folder 16	David Center Pamphlet, undated
Box 5, Folder 17	Dietary, 1980 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.
Box 5, Folder 18	DV Procedure, 1978 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.
Box 5, Folder 19	ETO and Steam Sterilizer Seminar, Oklahoma City, 1979
Box 5, Folder 20	ETO Information, 1976-1979
Box 5, Folder 21	Expenses and Financial Reimbursements, 1973-1983 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.

Box 5, Folder 22	Gnotobiotic Isolation Nurse Specialist Job Description, 1976-1981
Box 6, Folder 1	Inservice and Staff Conferences, 1978-1983
Box 6, Folder 2	Inventory Lists, 1978
Box 6, Folder 3	Isolator and Glove Information, 1977-1983
Box 6, Folder 4	Med Bay Copies, undated
Box 6, Folder 5	Meetings, 1971-1979 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.
Box 6, Folder 6	Meetings, 1971-1979 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.
Box 6, Folder 7	Patient Consent - Enzyme, 1977
Box 6, Folder 8	Peracetic Acid Safety Information, 1975-1980
Box 6, Folder 9	Playroom Check, 1982-1983
Box 6, Folder 10	Preparation and Use of the Sterile "Bubble" for Immune Deficiency, undated
Box 6, Folder 11	Procedure Manual, 1980-1983
Box 6, Folder 12	Professional Letters and Memos, 1971-1975
Box 6, Folder 13	Public Relations, 1979-1980
Box 6, Folder 14	Purchasing Receipts, 1979
Box 6, Folder 15	Purchasing Receipts, 1980
Box 6, Folder 16	Purchasing Receipts, 1981
Box 6, Folder 17	Purchasing Receipts, 1982
Box 6, Folder 18	Purchasing Receipts, 1983
Box 6, Folder 19	Purchasing Receipts, 1984
Box 7, Folder 1	Requisitions, 1965-1971
Box 7, Folder 2	School Arrangements, 1979

Box 7, Folder 3	Skill Lists for Nurses, 1979-1983
Box 7, Folder 4	Space Suit Information, 1980
Box 7, Folder 5	Specific Studies and Protocols, 1975-1978 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.
Box 7, Folder 6	Tarkett Commercial Flooring, 1982
Box 7, Folder 7	Time Sheets, 1979-1980
Box 7, Folder 8	Toilet Info, undated
Box 7, Folder 9	X-Ray Reports, 1971-1976 Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 6: Texas Children's Hospital Medical Records are restricted until 2034.

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## Series 7: Photographs, 1974-1983

Box 7, Folder 10	Celebrity Autographs, undated
Box 7, Folder 11	David Vetter and Family, 1976-1983 <a href="#">Image(s): Photographs - David and Family</a>
Box 7, Folder 12	Medical-related, undated Notes: Some health-related materials in Series 7: Photographs are restricted until 2034.
Box 7, Folder 13	NASA, 1974 <a href="#">Image(s): Photographs - NASA</a>
Box 8, Folder 3	David Vetter (9th birthday party), 1980
Box 9, Folder 3	Photographs - Oversize, undated

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