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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: InBae Yoon Papers
Identifier: NMAH.AC.1414
Extent: 13 Cubic feet (35 boxes)
Creator: Yoon, InBae, 1936-2014
Language: English
Some materials are in Korean.
Collection is in English.

Summary: InBae Yoon was a Korean American inventor. He specialized in OB-GYN surgery, and his inventions aided in the safety of laparoscopic and endoscopic surgery. The papers include personal documents, corporate agreements and licenses, technical drawings, patent applications, correspondence, project proposals, and methods and procedures.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Collection donated by Kyung Joo Yoon, widow of InBae Yoon, 2017.

Separated Materials
The Division of Medicine and Science holds artifacts related to this collection. See accession 2017.0024.

- Falope-Ring® Band (2017.0024.01)
- Demonstration Forceps (2017.0024.02)
- Wold Falope Ring Applicator (2017.0024.03)
- Wolf-Yoon Double Puncture Ring Applicator (2017.0024.04)
- Falope-Ring® Applicator (2017.0024.05)
- Mark II Applicator (2017.0024.06)
- Yoon and Stoup Falopian Ring Applicator (2017.0024.07)
Falope-Ring® Applicator (2017.0024.08)
An instrument with forcep-like handles (2017.0024.09)
An endoscope which can be used in conjunction with the Falope-Ring® Applicator (2017.0024.10)
Endopath Endoscopic Tissue Manipulator (2017.0024.11)
Safety Trocar (2017.0024.12)
Prototype Safety Trocar and Sleeve (2017.0024.13)
Prototype Safety Trocar (2017.0024.14)
Prototype Safety Trocar (2017.0024.15)
Disposable Safety Trocar (2017.0024.16)
Safety Trocar (2017.0024.17)
Ligaclip Endoscopic Multiple Clip Applier (2017.0024.18)
Endoscopic Simulation Training Device (2017.0024.19)

Processing Information
Processed by Sara Wheeler, July 2017; supervised by Alison Oswald, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
Collection is open for research. Gloves must be worn when handling unprotected photographs.

Conditions Governing Use
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.

Appraisal
The Archives Center staff focused on documenting three of Dr. Yoon's inventions: the "Yoon Ring," a device for tubal ligation for women, patented in 1975; a penetrating instrument with safety shield, and method for introducing a portal sleeve into a cavity in the body, patented in 1985; and surgical clips and applicator, patented in 1992.

Archivists examined approximately 147 cubic feet of material and selected approximately 19 cubic feet for permanent retention.
Biographical / Historical

Dr. InBae Yoon (1936-2014) was a prolific Korean American inventor of surgical devices and instrumentation. He was born in Korea during the Japanese Occupation (1910-1945) and attended the Yonsei University School of Medicine, earning his medical degree in 1961. From 1961 to 1964, Yoon served as medical officer in the South Korean Navy, and in 1964 he participated in a program developed to match Korean medical doctors with United States hospitals and medical schools. As a result, Yoon immigrated to Baltimore, Maryland to conduct his rotating internship and general surgical residency at Church Home and Hospital. During his residency, Yoon switched his training from general surgery to obstetrics and gynecology and became fascinated by laparoscopy, a method of surgery performed using a scope placed through the umbilicus, sometimes with other small incisions in the abdomen. During this period he was exposed to tubal ligation, one of the few surgeries done laparoscopically at the time. Observing some of the injuries and complications from these early laparoscopic procedures he became interested in safer laparoscopic methods. After completing his residency in 1969 and finishing a yearlong fellowship, he joined a private practice. In 1973 he then joined the John Hopkins University School of Medicine as an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology where he explored new laparoscopic techniques and procedures.

Yoon became convinced that laparoscopic or "keyhole" surgery was the future. His first invention, the Yoon Ring, was developed between 1972 and 1974, with the patent being issued in 1975 (US Patent 3,870,048). The Yoon Ring system, manufactured with KLI Incorporated, provided a safer method for laparoscopic tubal ligation by applying a silastic ring around the fallopian tube to prevent pregnancy. This simple mechanical method of tubal ligation avoided many of the complications associated with other tubal ligation techniques that utilized electrocautery. Yoon began to see further potential for the use of laparoscopy and from 1975 to 1985, he focused on inventing safety systems for laparoscopic procedures, including safety trocars, safety needles, and safety catheters, which all aided in different aspects of laparoscopic surgery. Yoon spent much of the late 1980s to the early 2000s, working on new innovations such as retractable penetrating instruments, suture tie instruments, cavity stents and expanders, as well as making modifications to previous safety system designs. During this period, Yoon investigated and sought out the assistance of a few large instrument manufacturing companies, such as Richard Wolf GmbH, Olympus, and Cabot Medical in an effort to bring his trocar designs to the market without success. In 1985, Yoon then incorporated his own company, Yoonitech, Inc. to pursue his inventions. In 1988, Yoon established a relationship with Johnson and Johnson, specifically the subsidiary of the company, Ethicon, which later became Ethicon Endo Surgery (EES) and licensed his shielded trocar patent (US Patent 4,535,773) to bring his product to market. From 1995-2005, Yoon continued to collaborate with EES for the production of instruments and techniques for laparoscopy and endoscopy. Dr. Yoon passed away on December 30, 2014. After 5 decades of focusing on this innovative approach to surgery, he amassed over 200 U.S. patents for his work.

Scope and Contents

The collection documents Dr. Yoon's life and career as a surgeon and his invention and development of numerous tools, instruments and procedures. The collection specifically focuses on three inventions: the "Yoon Ring", a device for tubal ligation for women patented in 1975; a penetrating instrument with safety shield, and method for introducing a portal sleeve into a cavity in the body, patented in 1985; and surgical clips and applicator, patented in 1992. All three were manufactured and widely used. The contents include invention notebooks, sketches, photographs and slides, correspondence, patents, patent applications, legal papers, business papers, articles and clippings, reference files, and some audiovisual materials.
Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 6 series.

**Series 1: Personal Documents and Correspondence, 1980-1999**

**Series 2: Professional Activities, 1974-2009**

**Series 3: Corporate Agreements and Correspondence, 1970-2005**

Subseries 3.1: Ethicon Endo-Surgery (Johnson & Johnson), 1987-2003
Subseries 3.3: Cabot Medical Instruments Corporation, 1984-1986
Subseries 3.4: KLI, 1973-1980
Subseries 3.5: Reznick, 1982-1986
Subseries 3.6: Other Disclosures and Partnerships, 1973-1999

**Series 4: Drawings and Technical Specifications, 1970-2005**

**Series 5: Legal Documents, 1970-2003**

Subseries 5.1: Patents, 1970-2003
Subseries 5.2: Ethicon Inc./InBae Yoon vs. United States Surgical Corporation/Choi, 1975-1998
Subseries 5.3: Correspondence, 1975-2001

**Series 6: Projects and Proposal Documents, 1975-2001**

Names and Subject Terms

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

**Subjects:**

Endoscopy
Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Inc.
Inventions -- 20th century
Inventors -- 20th century
Laparoscopes
Laparoscopic surgery
Medical Equipment
Medical innovations
Medical instruments and apparatus
Patents
Sterilization (Birth control)
Surgery
Surgical instruments and apparatus
United States Surgical Corporation
Types of Materials:

- Articles -- 20th century
- Business records -- 20th century
- Clippings -- 20th century
- Correspondence -- 20th century
- Design drawings
- Legal documents
- Notebooks -- 20th century
- Patent applications
- Patents -- 20th century
- Photographs -- 20th century
- Slides (photographs) -- 20th century

Occupations:

- Physicians
- Surgeons
### Container Listing

#### Series 1: Personal Documents and Correspondence, 1980 - 1999

This series contains Yoon's guide to the abbreviations used in his notes and outlines of what Yoon called his "Way of Life." Personal correspondence and Korean newspapers are also a part of the series.

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This series consists of professional correspondence, authored articles, and articles and textbooks featuring Yoon's procedures and methods. Also included are documents related to professional medical associations, Baltimore hospitals, and alumni newsletters.

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| Box 1, Folder 10              | Articles Related to Yoon-Ring, 1975-1987 |
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| Box 1, Folder 12              | *Advances in Female Sterilization Techniques Book*, 1976 |
| Box 1, Folder 13              | Journal Articles Featuring Yoon's Methods, 1976-1977 |
| Box 1, Folder 14              | George Read, 1978 |
| Box 1, Folder 15              | Articles by Yoon, 1979-1982 |
| Box 1, Folder 16              | Articles Related to Sterilizations, 1980-1999 |
| Box 1, Folder 17              | South Baltimore General Hospital, 1982 |
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| Box 2, Folder 3               | Textbook of Laparoscopy, 1985 |
| Box 2, Folder 4               | Greater Baltimore Medical Center Request for Staff Privileges, 1985-1987 |
| Box 2, Folder 5               | Francis Scott Key Medical Center, 1985-1987 |
| Box 2, Folder 6               | John Hopkins Programs and Mailings, 1987-1989 |
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| Box 3, Folder 1               | Professional Mailings and Bulletins, 1989 |
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| Box 3, Folder 3               | *Manual of Endoscopy*, 1992 |
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Box 3, Folder 5     Equipment Advertisements, 1992
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Box 3, Folder 7     Korean-American Medical Association Mailings and Directory, 1998
Box 3, Folder 8     Endopath Trocar System Brochure, 1998
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Box 3, Folder 14    Yoon's Notes on Time Line of Events, undated
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Box 3, Folder 17    Blank Fax Cover Sheets, undated

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This series contains licensing agreements, confidential disclosures, and correspondence with corporate partners whom Yoon worked with throughout his career.

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This series contains drawings and technical specifications of Yoon's various medical devices and instruments. The drawings range from basic sketches to more detailed drawings of rings, ring clips, various iterations of the safety trocar, safety needles, and space-creating or expanding instruments.

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