Guide to the InBae Yoon Papers

NMAH.AC.1414
Sara Wheeler
2017
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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: Collection is in English. Some materials are in Korean.
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 Faolpian 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 invention: 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


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.

Box 1, Folder 1  Shorthand Key Notes, 1980 - 1981
Box 1, Folder 2  "Yoon Way of Life", 1983
Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 3  Personal Correspondence, 1985
Box 1, Folder 4  "Yoon's Way of Life and Creative Thinking", 1988-1989
Box 1, Folder 5  Korean Newspapers, 1989
Box 1, Folder 6  Notes in Korean, 1993
Box 1, Folder 7  "We Moved" Notification, 1999

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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.

Box 1, Folder 8  American Association of Gynecological Laparoscopists, 1974-1976
Box 1, Folder 9  American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 1974-1976
Box 1, Folder 10 Articles Related to Yoon-Ring, 1975-1987
Box 1, Folder 11 Sterilization Book, 1976
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
Box 2, Folder 1 Resumes, Cover Letters, and References for Yoon's Review, 1982-1986
Box 2, Folder 2 Professional Correspondence, 1984-1986
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
Box 2, Folder 7 Gynecological Endoscopy, 1988
Box 2, Folder 8 Professional Announcement, 1989
Box 2, Folder 9 Study in Korea-Yonsei University, 1989
Box 2, Folder 10  Union Memorial Hospitals Memos and Notices, 1989
Box 3, Folder 1  Professional Mailings and Bulletins, 1989
Box 3, Folder 2  American Medical Association, 1991
Box 3, Folder 3  Manual of Endoscopy, 1992
Box 3, Folder 4  Origin Medsystems Brochure, 1992
Box 3, Folder 5  Equipment Advertisements, 1992
Box 3, Folder 6  Union Memorial Hospital, 1992-1994
Box 3, Folder 7  Korean-American Medical Association Mailings and Directory, 1998
Box 3, Folder 8  Endopath Trocar System Brochure, 1998
Box 3, Folder 9  Syllabus for Laparoscopy Workshop for the Society for the Advancement of Contraception, 1998
Box 3, Folder 10 Severance Alumni Association News, 2009
Box 3, Folder 11 Blank Patient Forms, undated
Box 3, Folder 12 Professional Announcements, undated
Box 3, Folder 13 Curriculum Vitae, undated
Box 3, Folder 14 Yoon's Notes on Time Line of Events, undated
Box 3, Folder 15 Wyman Park Health System Directory, undated
Box 3, Folder 16 Copies of American V Mueller Catalog-Plastic and Reconstructive Instruments, undated
Box 3, Folder 17 Blank Fax Cover Sheets, undated

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Series 3: Corporate Agreements and Correspondence, 1973 - 2003

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

Subseries 3.1: Ethicon Endo-Surgery (Johnson and Johnson), 1987 - 2003

Box 3, Folder 18 Ethicon Correspondence, 1987
Box 3, Folder 19 Agendas, 1988 July 27
Box 3, Folder 20 Confidential Disclosure and Secrecy Agreement, 1988
Box 3, Folder 21 Ethicon Agreements and Licenses, 1988
Box 3, Folder 22 Ethicon Correspondence, 1988
Box 4, Folder 1 Ethicon Disclosure--Exhibit A, 1988
Box 4, Folder 2 Ethicon Disclosure--Exhibit B, 1988
Box 4, Folder 3 Exhibit A, A-1, B, and C Disclosed to Ethicon, 1988
Box 4, Folder 4 Balloon Safety Trocar Systems Disclosures, 1988
Box 4, Folder 5 Ethicon Agreement Amendment, 1989
Box 4, Folder 6 Ethicon Correspondence, 1989
Box 4, Folder 7 Ethicon Disclosure and Agreement, 1990 January 23
Box 4, Folder 8 Confidential Disclosures by Yoon to Ethicon about Bandages, 1990
Box 4, Folder 9 Confidential Disclosure, 1990 January 23
Box 4, Folder 10 Ethicon Correspondence, 1990
Box 4, Folder 11 Travel Expenses, 1990 September-December
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Box 5, Folder 1 Confidential Disclosures to Ethicon, 1992-1995
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Box 5, Folder 8  Disclosure--Ultra Sound Safety Trocar, Safety and Needle and Safety Catheter, 1996
Box 5, Folder 9  Meetings Agendas and Notes, 1996-2001
Box 6, Folder 1  Protocol for PVA, 1998
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Box 6, Folder 3  Disclosure Meeting with Ethicon, 1999
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Box 6, Folder 5  Meeting Notes and Related Correspondence, 2001
Box 6, Folder 6  Disclosure--Multiple Clip Application with Ultracision Energy, 2001
Box 6, Folder 7  Disclosure--Improvement of Endoscopic and Open Surgery, 2001
Box 6, Folder 8  Disclosure--Improvement of Endoscopic and Open Surgery by Multifunctional Ultracision Energy
Box 6, Folder 9  Disclosure of Ultracision Biopsy System, 2001
Box 6, Folder 10  Summary of Ethicon Endo-Surgery Disclosures and Dealings, 2001
Box 6, Folder 11  Improvement and Modification Notes on Ultracision, 2001
Box 6, Folder 12  Disclosure--Ultracision Ring Applicator System, 2001
Box 6, Folder 13  Disclosure--Multifunctional Ultrasound Energy Instrument, 2001
Box 6, Folder 14  Disclosure--Skin Incision by Ultracision with or without Application of Liquid, 2001

Box 6, Folder 15  Disclosures and Meeting Notes, 2001

Box 6, Folder 16  Disclosure--Multifunctional Ultrasound Energy Instrument, 2001

Box 6, Folder 17  Johnson-Johnson Company, Ethicon Endo-Surgery, product catalog and price list, 1994

Box 6  Johnson-Johnson Company, Ethicon Endo-Surgery, product catalog and price list (empty binder), 1994

Box 7, Folder 1  Disclosure--Ultracision Energy for Cervical Conization and Coagulation, 2001

Box 7, Folder 2  Suture Group Meeting Notes, 2002

Box 7, Folder 3  Ethicon Correspondence, 2003

Box 7, Folder 4  Safety Trocar Information and Drawings for Ethicon Patent, undated


Box 7, Folder 5  Restated Agreement with Richard Wolf GmbH, 1980

Box 7, Folder 6  Richard Wolf GmbH Agreements, 1980-1983

Box 7, Folder 7  Richard Wolf GmbH Correspondence, 1981-1984

Box 7, Folder 9  Richard Wolf GmbH Correspondence, 1984-1986

Box 7, Folder 10  Summary of Disclosures and Related Patents, 1986

Subseries 3.3: Cabot Medical Instruments Corporation, 1984 - 1986

Box 8, Folder 1  Warren Wood Correspondence, 1984-1986

Box 8, Folder 2  Drafts of Cabot Medical Corporation Agreements, 1984

Box 8, Folder 3  Warren G. Wood Disclosure Agreement, 1984

Box 8, Folder 4  Cabot Medical Corporation Agreements, 1984-1986
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Box 8, Folder 4A  Cabot Medical Corporation, product literature, 1984

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Series 4: Drawing and Technical Specifications, 1970 - 2005

Image(s)

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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