8 items (1 folder)

Biographical Note: Surgeon and inventor of the first successful artificial artery to be used in human patients. Arthur B. Voorhees, Jr. was born in Moorestown, New Jersey, on Dec. 23, 1921. He was educated at the University of Virginia and graduated from the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (P&S) in 1946. After a surgical internship at New York’s Presbyterian Hospital and a year as a Surgical Research Fellow at P&S, Voorhees spent two years in the military. He returned to Presbyterian in 1950 to complete a surgical residency and remained as an attending surgeon at the hospital and a faculty member at P&S for the rest of his career.

Voorhees began work on artificial arteries in 1947 when during an autopsy he discovered that a silk suture he had accidentally left in a dog several weeks before had been coated with natural endocardial tissue cells. He first experimented with silk handkerchiefs but soon moved on to vinyon-N cloth developed by Union Carbide for making World War II parachutes. The first successful use of his invention occurred at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in 1952. His paper, “The Use of Tubes Constructed from Vinyon ‘N’ Cloth in Bridging Arterial Defects,” co-authored with Alfred Jaretzki and Arthur W. Blakemore, appeared in Annals of Surgery that same year (v.135, p. 332-336).

Voorhees retired from Columbia-Presbyterian in 1984. He died on May 12, 1992 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, survived by his wife and three children.


Scope and Content: The papers include a chapter on the “Excision of Femoral Artery Aneurysm” for the second edition of Mastery of Surgery; correspondence; a transcript of a short oral history interview on his work with artificial arteries; notes on early experiments with artificial arteries in dogs; a list of operations he had performed; and an undated manuscript of what appears to be a lecture on hypertension.

Access: Because the papers include Protected Health Information (PHI) as defined by the US Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), access is allowed only under the terms of Archives and Special Collections’ Access Policy to Records Containing Protected Health Information.

Language: English.

**RELATED COLLECTIONS:** Archives & Special Collections also holds the papers of Voorhees’ colleague and collaborator, [Alfred Jaretzki, III](#).

**Subjects**

Arteries – Surgery.
Blood vessels – Surgery.