Preserving Family Medicine’s Past for the Sake of Our Future
1) What is the Center for the History of Family Medicine (CHFM)?

2) What does the CHFM collect?

3) Why is any of this important?
QUESTION #1:

What is the Center for the History of Family Medicine?
The CHFM is the COLLECTIVE MEMORY of Family Medicine.
Our mission is the **collection, conservation, exhibition, and study** of all materials related to the history of the specialty, including family practice and general practice.
The CHFM is the ONLY historical repository in the United States that is devoted exclusively to this purpose.
The CHFM houses the historical collections not just of the Academy, but of all of the eight major Family Medicine organizations that comprise the “Family of Family Medicine.”
The “Family” of Family Medicine
QUESTION #2:

What does the CHFM collect?
Since its establishment in 1992, the CHFM has evolved into three different components:

• It is an Archives;
• An Historical Research Library; and
• A Museum
As An Archives:
The CHFM is the official repository of all eight major Family Medicine organizations.
We also collect the personal and professional papers and oral histories of past prominent leaders in the specialty.
And we also have extensive film, video, and photo archives.
As an Historical Research Library: We collect past and present publications by or about Family Medicine and family physicians, as well as family practice and general practice.
And as a Museum: We collect artifacts (three-dimensional items) relating to the specialty and create permanent, temporary, and traveling exhibits for special meetings and events.
(Examples include periodic exhibits in the 6th floor EVP Conference Room, and also downstairs in the 1st floor Visitors Center.)
AND FINALLY, QUESTION #3:

Why is any of this important?
• An organization or a specialty without a collective memory is no different from a person without a memory.

• Imagine for a moment if you lost your memory; if you had no idea of what you have done or where you have gone in your life.
• How would you know what worked or didn’t work?

• How would you be able to make intelligent and informed decisions?

• How would you know how to survive?

• Memory is not only our identity, but it is our unspoken guide and teacher.
So as the collective memory of the specialty, our collections often play a key role in supporting Family Medicine’s ongoing:

- educational,
- legal,
- planning,
- public relations, and
- research efforts.
“What appeals to me about an Archives is collecting, under one roof, all items we can identify that have historical relevance, not only for museum-type display (including perhaps traveling exhibits) but also files for scholarship . . . . I do not assume that the story of family practice has ever been told adequately, or even that we who were involved in it necessarily know all that we were responding to; but we have this wonderful opportunity to outline the shape of what ought to be included.”

– Gayle Stephens, MD, 1992
• This is an extraordinary opportunity and a responsibility that we all share today.

• An opportunity to collect the history that is being made today and to use this information to help guide and promote this specialty into the future.
“It is the sign of a dry age when the great men of the past are held in light esteem.”

– William Osler, MD

“If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants.”

– Sir Isaac Newton
FINAL THOUGHTS:

If Family Medicine’s story is worth telling, isn’t its history worth preserving?

And if we don’t do it, who will??

Please make a donation to support the Center for the History of Family Medicine:

www.aafpfoundation.org/donatetoday
QUESTIONS?

For more information, please visit:

www.aafpfoundation.org/chfm