



**Center for the History of Family Medicine**  
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Administered by the  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
Foundation

## **HISTORY OF THE CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF FAMILY MEDICINE (CHFM)**

The Center for the History of Family Medicine (formerly called the Archives for Family Practice) was originally established as a special project of the AAFP in 1989 under the direction of Claudene Clinton, the former Director of the AAFP's Division of Research and Information Services. As archival material was compiled from the Academy's files, a need for documenting and preserving the history of Family Medicine soon became evident. That same year, the Board of Directors of the Academy established an "AAFP Archives" within the Academy, and following her retirement as Director of the Division of Research and Information Services, Ms. Clinton served as the first Archivist for the Archives on a contractual basis with the Academy.

On January 1, 1992, administrative responsibility for the Archives was transferred from the Academy to the AAFP Foundation. There were several reasons for this transfer: Ms. Clinton intended to discontinue her contract to administer the Archives at the end of 1991; after review, according to a memo from then AAFP Executive Vice President Robert Graham, M.D., it was determined that the archives was "a logical extension of the present activities and services of the Huffington Library," then a part of the Foundation; the Archives' new focus (on documenting not just the history of the Academy but the specialty of Family Medicine as a whole) and its new name (it had been changed from the "AAFP Archives" to "The Archives for Family Practice") required that a neutral member of the "family of Family Medicine" administer it, a role which it was felt the Foundation could best fill due to its non-profit status; and finally, that being housed under the auspices of the Foundation, a non-profit, charitable 501(c)(3) corporation, would also provide the added benefit of enabling the Archives to solicit donations of money as well as materials for its collections.

Following its transfer to the Foundation, a new full-time Archivist was hired, acquisitions and access and use policies were developed, and major strides were made in broadening both the depth and breadth of the Archives collections through preserving and organizing the records of enduring organizational and

historical value generated by both the major national organizations involved in Family Medicine and by individuals involved in the history and development of Family Medicine. Further support for the activities of the Archives was provided through an unrestricted educational grant provided by Sandoz (later renamed Novartis) Pharmaceuticals averaging \$50,000 per year from 1993 through 2002. In 1998, an endowment was also created for the Center, to help realize the Board of Curators' vision of a "self-sustaining and self-supporting" entity operating within the Foundation.

By 2003, the Archives for Family Practice had evolved into the principal resource center for the collection, conservation, exhibition and study of materials relating to the history of Family Medicine. Besides the Academy and the Foundation, other Family Medicine organizations that contribute by placing their records into its holdings, donating to its endowment and having their members serve on its advisory board include the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), the Association of Departments of Family Medicine (ADFM), the Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors (AFMRD), the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG), and the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM). The collections had also evolved, growing into four separate and distinct areas: 1) a corporate, or organizational archives for the holdings of the seven Family Medicine organizations; 2) manuscript collections of prominent family physicians and family medicine educators and staff; 3) an historical research library containing books written by and about family physicians and reference materials on Family Medicine; and 4) a museum collection of medical artifacts relating to the specialty for exhibition. All of the collections within the Archives serve to document the history of Family Medicine's changing role in delivering health care and advocating for patients.

This rapid expansion of the Archives for Family Practice's collections, coupled with some confusion generated by its name (which was similar to several medical journals bearing the title "Archives"), gave rise for the need for a name change for the Archives. Consequently, in November of 2003, the Board of Curators and the AAFP/F Board of Trustees approved a new name for the facility, and on January 1, 2004, the Archives for Family Practice officially became the Center for the History of Family Medicine.

The Center for the History of Family Medicine is presently the only institution dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Family Medicine in the United States. It serves to document all aspects of the profession in all of its spheres, including education, leadership development, advocacy, and in the continuing care of patients from birth to death. As a unique institution within the world of Family Medicine, the CHFM chronicles Family Medicine's distinguished past and looks forward to its promising future.