

Dr. Francis Patrick McNamara, M.D. Collection

“S. S. Pierce is Boston’s best. Dr. McNamara leads the west.”
-written by a colleague in 1940

Scope Note

Dr. Francis P. McNamara, M. D. was born in 1883 in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. His father was an Irish immigrant who worked twelve to fourteen hours a day in the paper mills, and his mother was the daughter of Irish immigrants. His parents desired that their children “should have the education that had been denied them in the old country” (F-1, 4.). Dr. McNamara and his brothers and sisters started working as children to help pay for their education (F-1, 4.). Dr. McNamara chose the field of medicine after working as a pharmacist; he received his M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School and then completed four years of post-graduate work at Yale University School of Medicine specializing in the same field as his sister, Pathology and Bacteriology (F-1, 3., F-8, 5.). In 1921, Dr. H. B. Gratiot, the founder and patron of the Finley Hospital Laboratory in Dubuque, Iowa, invited Dr. McNamara to come to Dubuque to serve as the Finley Hospital pathologist and to head the pathology laboratory (F-2, 6.-8.).

Dr. McNamara married Josephine Gregoire in 1925. The Gregoires were a talented French Catholic family who played an influential role in the early growth of St. Genevieve, Missouri and Dubuque. Photos of Dr. and Mrs. McNamara at their home at 491 Alpine St. are located in “The Family of Jules C. Gregoire Collection” at the Center for Dubuque History. The Gregoire and Dr. McNamara collections were originally donated to the Dubuque Visitation Academy Archives by Elise Gregoire, Josephine’s sister.

Dr. McNamara led the Finley Hospital pathology laboratory for twenty-three years. He created a museum with over one thousand pathologic specimens and instituted weekly conferences for the Finley medical staff to consider interesting cases. He was a faculty member of the Finley School of Nursing continuously ever since he came to Dubuque (F-7, 3.) and, in 1940, received an honorary membership in the Finley Hospital Alumnae Nurses Association (F-6, 1.,2.). He also was the pathologist to Mercy Hospital in Dubuque and consulting pathologist to Decorah Hospital in Decorah, Iowa. In addition, he was the author of many publications and presented scientific exhibits at medical meetings. His exhibit which illustrated the activities of his laboratory at Finley won a Silver Medal at the 1933 American Medical Association Scientific Assembly (F-3, 6.).

Dr. McNamara held the presidency of the Finley Hospital Medical Staff, the Dubuque County Medical Society, and the Iowa Association of Pathologists (F-1, 4.). He was honored by being elected to the presidency of the Iowa State Medical Society for the 1940-1941 session (F-4, 1.). The Dubuque County Medical Association honored Dr. McNamara's election with a testimonial dinner (F-5, 1.). In addition, he was a pioneer in the fight against cancer; he advocated that patients be seen and treated early in the course of their disease, and that poverty should be no bar to receiving treatment (F-9, 1.). He was the author of the Cancer Manual of the Iowa State Medical Society, of which more than 40,000 copies were distributed. He took an active part in developing the Women's Field Army for the control of cancer and was editor of their bulletin.

Dr. McNamara died in July of 1944 as the result of a heart attack (F-8, 1.; F-9, 1., 2.). His death followed his habitually zealous work during the lean-staffed years of WWII. John P. Mulgrew, a Dubuque writer known as "Jazbo of Old Dubuque", memorialized Dr. McNamara in a poem, "In Line of Duty" (F-8, 7., 10.). A Tumor Clinic was established at Mercy Hospital in Dr. McNamara's memory (F-9, 1., 2.). Dr. McNamara was greatly missed by everyone who knew him (F-8, 8.).

Dr. Francis Patrick McNamara, M.D. Collection
Inventory

Autobiography and Personal Possessions FPMc F-1

1. Photo of Dr. McNamara taken in 1933 when he received the Silver Medal for his exhibit presented at the American Medical Association Scientific Assembly
2. Watercolor of Dr. McNamara
3. Autobiographical notes
4. Autobiography
5. "Honorary Citizen" certificate from Boys' Town, 1940
6. "Honorary Citizen" certificate from Boys' Town, 1942
7. Reunion Guide for the 1916 Harvard Reunion held in 1941
8. Dr. McNamara's wallet
9. Memo from Yale Medical School

Employment-Search Correspondence FPMc F-2

1. Letter from the University of Iowa
2. Letter from Buffalo General Hospital
3. Letter sent to the University of Tennessee, Memphis
4. Letter from the University of North Dakota
5. Letter from Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown, Pennsylvania
6. Letter from Dr. Gratiot, Finley Hospital
7. Letter from Dr. Gratiot, Finley Hospital
8. Letter from Dr. Gratiot, Finley Hospital

Career Part 1 FPMc F-3

1. "The Development of the Small Hospital Laboratory", F. P. McNamara, M.D. *The Modern Hospital*. September and October 1923
2. "Report of the Laboratory of Pathology and Bacteriology" and Dr. McNamara's "Comment", (eighth annual report)
3. Dr. McNamara's "Comment" from "The Report of the Laboratory of Pathology and Bacteriology", 1927
4. "Ten Years of Laboratory Progress in a 100 Bed Hospital", F.P. McNamara, M.D. *The Modern Hospital*, February 1932 (2 copies, with photos of Dr. McNamara's office, his museum, pathology laboratory, and the photography room)

5. Photo of his exhibit “The Activities of the Pathologic Laboratory in a Hundred Bed Hospital” presented at the 1933 American Medical Association (AMA) Conference in Milwaukee
6. Photos of the silver medal he received from the AMA for his 1933 exhibit
7. Constitution and By-Laws of the AMA, 1935
8. “The American Board of Pathology Booklet of Information with list of Certified Pathologists”, 1937
9. “Practical Methods of Reducing the Cancer Death Rate”, F. P. McNamara, M.D., F.A.C.P., Chairman, Cancer Committee, Iowa State Medical Society, Dubuque, Iowa; *Radiological Review and Mississippi Valley Medical Journal*, pp. 22-26, January 1937
10. Photo of Dr. McNamara and nursing students in the Finley Hospital pathological museum
11. “Incidence of Malignant Disease in 670 Necropsies. The Finley Hospital Clinico-Pathologic Conferences”, F.P. McNamara, M.D. *The Journal of the Iowa State Medical Society*, April 1940

Election to the Presidency of the Iowa State Medical Society FPMc F-4

1. “Honored”, *newspaper* article announcing the election of Dr. McNamara to the presidency of the Iowa State Medical Society on May 2, 1940
2. Congratulatory telegram: “S.S. Pierce is Boston’s best. Dr. McNamara leads the west.”
3. Congratulatory telegram: “You can’t keep a Harvard man down.”
4. Congratulatory telegram and request for biography and photo
5. Congratulatory telegram and invitation
6. Index cards with Dr. McNamara’s notes for his “President-Elect’s Address”
7. Dr. McNamara’s copy of the President-Elect’s Address, “Some Methods of Stimulating Medical Progress in Iowa”
8. Congratulatory letter from Dr. J. F. Auner, M.D., Des Moines
9. Thank you and congratulatory letter from a colleague from the Yale University Laboratory of Pathology who attended the meeting

Dubuque County Medical Society Testimonial Dinner FPMc F-5

1. “Tribute Paid to Dr. McNamara—Testimonial Dinner Given by Medical Society”, Dubuque *Telegraph Herald*, May 22, 1940
2. Invitation to the testimonial dinner on May 21, 1940 in recognition of Dr. McNamara’s election to the Presidency of the Iowa State Medical Society
3. Congratulatory letter from Dr. J. V. Conzett, a dentist from Dubuque

4. Congratulatory telegram from Walter L. Bierring, M.D., Commissioner of the Iowa State Board of Health
5. Congratulatory telegram from Dr. William Schiele, Chicago
6. Congratulatory letter from E. M. Myers, M.D., President of the Iowa State Board of Health
7. Notes for the program
8. Speech given by Dr. H. M. Pahlas, M.D., Dubuque, honoring Dr. McNamara

Career Part 2 FPMc F-6

1. Certificate of Honorary Membership to the Finley Hospital Nurses' Alumnae Association
2. Speech bestowing honorary membership to the Finley Nurses Alumnae Association, June 1940
3. "The President Elect's Address: Some Methods of Stimulating Medical Progress in Iowa", F.P. McNamara, M.D. *The Journal of the Iowa State Medical Society*, June 1940 (8 copies)
4. "The President's Address: The Public's Interest in High Professional Standards", F.P. McNamara, M.D., Dubuque, Iowa, *The Journal of the Iowa State Medical Society*. June 1941 (6 copies)
5. Thank-you letter from Dr. John Thorson, Dubuque
6. Letter awarding a certificate of merit for Dr. McNamara's exhibit at the 1941 Iowa State Medical Society Conference

Career Part 3 FPMc F-7

1. Letter appointing Dr. McNamara as Examining Physician for Local Board No. 2, Dubuque County
2. Letter certifying Dr. McNamara as a member of the Emergency Medical Unit of the U.S. Citizens Defense Corps in Dubuque County
3. "Bulletin of The Finley Hospital School of Nursing", 1944
4. Program for the 1944 AMA in Chicago
5. Assignment of space for an exhibit at the 1944 AMA Annual Session

Obituaries and Memorials FPMc F-8

1. "Dr. M'Namara Death Victim—Past President of State Medical Body Succumbs", *Dubuque Telegraph Herald*, July 3, 1944 (4 copies)
2. Letter from Walter Bierring, Commissioner of the Iowa State Department of Health
3. "Resolution Adopted by the Iowa State Board of Health"
4. "Resolutions adopted by the Order of the Elks, Dubuque Lodge"

5. Letter from Professor George H. Smith of Yale University School of Medicine
6. Obituary in the Journal of the American Medical Association, p. 864
7. “Francis Patrick McNamara, M.D., 1883-1944, In Memoriam”, Henry G. Langworthy, M.D., Dubuque, containing tributes of colleagues; tributes from Walter L. Bierring, M.D. and George H. Smith; *The Journal of the Iowa State Medical Society*, August, 1944, pp. 381-383 (3 copies)
8. “In Memoriam”, Report of the Iowa State Department of Health for the Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1944, p. 1
9. “In Memoriam”, Bulletin of the Iowa Division of the Field Army of the American Cancer Society, Nov. 1944, pp. 1 and 2 (2 copies)
10. “In Line of Duty”, poem by John P. Mulgrew, “Jazbo of Old Dubuque”

Tumor Clinic Memorial FPMc F-9

1. “State Doctors Urge Memorial to Dr. McNamara—Tumor Detection Clinic Proposed as Fitting Local Tribute”, *Dubuque Telegraph Herald*, April 28, 1946 (8 copies)
2. “Tumor Clinic Honors Doctor—Memorial to Dr. McNamara Held Twice Monthly”, *Dubuque Telegraph Herald*, April 13, 1947

Missing

- Biography of Dr. McNamara by Mary Glew, R.N.
- “Round table met Thursday” newspaper article

Scope Note and Inventory compiled by Janet Packard, Volunteer, Center for Dubuque History, Loras College, November 2011