

**Harris County Archives
Houston, Texas**

Finding Aid

DR. JOSEPH A. JACHIMCZYK PAPERS

Dates: 1874 -2005 (1950 - 1995)

Manuscript Collection: MC009

Size: 2 cubic feet, 12 volumes

Restrictions on Access: None

Restrictions on Use: None

Acquisition: Loretta Jachimczyk, 2005.

Accession Number: 2005.003;

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Creator Sketch:

One of five children, Joseph A. Jachimczyk (Dr. Joe) was born September 15, 1923, in Bridgeport, Connecticut to Michael and Mary Jachimczyk. After graduating from St. John Kanty Prep in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1941, Jachimczyk joined the United States Army. He finished his undergraduate education and began medical school at the University of Mississippi prior to his discharge in 1945. He completed the two-year program at the University of Mississippi in 1946 and continued at the University of Tennessee where he graduated with a Doctor of Medicine on March 22, 1948. After completing an internship and residencies in pathology from 1949 to 1953 in Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Ohio, Jachimczyk worked in the Medical Examiner's Office for six months in Maryland before moving to Boston in 1954. He was employed by the United States Public Health Service from 1954 to 1956 and Harvard University from 1956 to 1957 while he attended Boston College Law School. He received his law degree in 1958.

In 1957 Jachimczyk was recruited by Dr. Jared E. Clarke, Harris County's Medical Examiner, to be Harris County's first forensic pathologist. Dr. Clarke resigned on September 1, 1960, and Jachimczyk became the Chief Medical Examiner, professionalizing the role of Medical Examiner in Harris County.

Dr. Jachimczyk made numerous improvements to Harris County's Medical Examiner's Office by constantly fighting to increase funding, personnel, equipment, and space. The

operations of the morgue were often divided between inadequate locations creating a backlog of forensic evidence that frequently resulted in the delay of trials. By 1984 the Joseph A. Jachimczyk Forensic Center was dedicated near the Texas Medical Center on Old Spanish Trail Road, Houston, Texas. In 1991 the center was expanded by an additional 50,000 square feet to keep pace with Harris County's growing population.

Dr. Jachimczyk's thirty-eight year career defined the Medical Examiner's Office in Harris County. He personally combined the medial and legal roles related to death in an effort to solve crimes. His work was not without controversy. Not only did he solve cases where the cause of death was incorrectly diagnosed, but on occasion he would also miss a homicide. He dealt with mass murders and serial killers. Jachimczyk had an interest in high profile national cases such as Marilyn Monroe's death. He also participated in the Court of Last Resort, a group of professionals dedicated to justice working with detective writer Earl Stanley Gardner.

In addition to his duties at the Medical Examiner's Office, Dr. Jachimczyk lectured medical and legal groups concerning the value of forensic science. He received numerous awards including in 1995 the first Endowed Professorship in Forensic Pathology from the Board of Regents of the University of Texas and the Gift of Sight award from the National Eye Bank.

Dr. Jachimczyk was active in the Polish community, Kanty Alumni Association, and was a deacon at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Houston, Texas. In 1976, he obtained a Bachelors of Theology from the University of St. Thomas. He died December 7, 2004, at 81 years of age.

Joseph Jachimczyk married Loretta Slomski in 1950. They had four children: Jane, Michael, Peggy, and Mary Lou.

Collection Summary:

Newspaper clippings, printed materials, photographs, correspondence, and artifacts, document the personal and professional work of Dr. Joseph A. Jachimczyk (1923-2004), Harris County's Chief Medical Examiner (1960-1995) for 35 years. The collection is divided into nine series: Correspondence, Subject Files, Legal, Creative Works, Printed Materials, Monographs, Photographs, Scrapbooks, and Artifacts.

Archivists Note:

No original order was discernable when the papers were donated to the Harris County Archives. For further information please see the records of the Harris County Medical Examiner's Office. <http://www.hctx.net/CmpDocuments/20/Finding%20Aids/FA-Medical%20ExaminerCR41.pdf>

Inventory

Series: Correspondence
Size: .15 cubic feet
Range of Dates: 1957-2005

Scope and Contents Note:

Correspondence documents the professional and personal interests of Dr. Joseph Jachimczyk from the time of his inquiry into becoming Harris County's first forensic pathologist until the time of his death. Of particular interest is the correspondence with Dr. Jared E. Clark (1957) concerning employment with Harris County, complaints from citizens, and congratulatory correspondence. Correspondence is in both English and Polish.

Title	Dates	Location
Correspondence	1957 -1993	0948-X-01
Correspondence	1995, nd	0948-X-02
Correspondence	1996 - 2005; nd	0948-X-03

Series: Subject Files
Size: .2 cubic feet
Range of Dates: 1874 - 2002

Scope and Contents Note:

Subject files include applications, correspondence, case files, death certificates, speeches, and teaching materials that document the interests and accomplishments of Dr. Joseph Jachimczyk in both his personal and professional lives. The series is divided into two subseries: Personal and Professional.

Subseries: Personal

Of particular interest are Jachimczyk's school records, correspondence, and speeches documenting his long standing relationship with Kanty Prep in Erie, Pennsylvania, copies of the case files relating to the deaths of Joan Hill, Marilyn Monroe, John Paul Jones, and John F. Kennedy, and correspondence and newspaper clippings recording his friendship with writer Earle Stanley Gardner (1958-2002).

Title	Dates	Location
Joan Hill	1969-1984	0948-X-04
Marilyn Monroe	1962-1963	0948-X-05
John Paul Jones	1965	0948-X-06
John F. Kennedy	1972	0948-X-07
Death Certificates	1874, 1906	0948-X-08
Earl Stanley Gardner	1958-2002; nd	0948-X-09
Kanty	1941-1992	0948-X-10

Subseries: Professional

The Professional Subseries includes several versions of his curriculum vitae, application for membership in the Texas Bar Association, teaching career, awards and honors, and the history of the medical examiner's facility.

Title	Date	Location
Awards and Honors	1983-2001; nd	0948-X-11
Curriculum Vitae	1956-2001	0948-X-12
Medical Examiner Facility	1991; nd	0948-X-13
Teaching	1969-1994	0948-X-14
Texas Bar Association	1957-1996	0948-X-15

Series: Legal

Size: 4 items

Range of Dates: 1969-1997

Scope and Contents Note:

A letter regarding evidence in the John Hill case (1977), an agreement from the Commissioners Court concerning a proposed county crime laboratory (1986), a deposition, (1997) and a copy of the Medical Examiner's Law (1969) record the administrative and professional aspects of the job of Medical Examiner.

Title	Date	Location
Legal	1969-1997, nd	0948-X-16

Series: Creative Works

Size: 14 items

Range of Dates: 1959- 1991

Scope and Contents Note:

Articles and speeches (written in both English and Polish) by Dr. Jachimczyk record his thoughts pertaining to autopsies and identification, the medicolegal system, transplant issues, the importance of professional training in toxicology and pathology for a medical examiner, and the dedication of the expansion of the Medical Examiner's Office in 1991.

Works collected from other authors concern runaway children, unsolved murders, and a humorous satire on the nature of man.

Title	Date	Location
Articles by Dr. Jachimczyk	1961-1968	0948-X-17
Speeches by Dr. Jachimczyk	1959-1979	0948-X-18
Various Authors	nd	0948-X-19
Forensic Center Expansion	1991, 11/01	VHS099
Forensic Center Dedication	1991, 11/01	VHS100
Speeches by Dr. Jachimczyk, Audio Tape [Digital copy is available]	ca. 1973	0001-A-00

Series: Printed Materials

Size: .5 cubic feet

Range of Dates: 1953-2005

Scope and Contents Note:

Newspaper clippings (1953-2005), pamphlets (1985, 1997), magazine and journal articles (1973-2005), and certificates (1923-2004) document the professional life of Dr. Joseph A. Jachimczyk. The series is divided into four subseries.

Subseries: Newspaper Clippings
Range of Dates: 1953 – 2005

Scope and Contents Note:

Newspaper Clippings include coverage of major cases such as Joan Hill and Howard Hughes and document the role of the Medical Examiner both within Harris County government and the medical community.

Title	Date	Location
Newspaper Clippings	1953-1968	0948-X-20
Newspaper Clippings	1974-1985	0948-X-21
Newspaper Clippings	1986-1993	0948-X-22
Newspaper Clippings	1995-2005	0948-X-23
Newspaper Clippings: Howard Hughes	1976, n.d.	0948-X-24
Newspaper Clippings	n.d.	0948-X-25

Subseries: Pamphlets and Magazines
Range of Dates: 1975 – 2005

Scope and Contents Note:

A church bulletin, advertising flyer for a continuing medical education class, and magazine articles concerning Dr. Jachimczyk or his work comprise this subseries. Of particular note are “How the Coroner Solves True-life Mysteries,” by Al Reinert (*Texas Monthly*, Nov. 1975), “Reading History in the Soil” (*Rice University Review*, Winter 1975 / 1976) and “Our Stories,” by Gary Taylor (*On Patrol*, Spring 1996).

Title	Date	Location
Pamphlets	1985, 1997	0948-X-26
Magazine/Journal	1975-1979	0948-X-27
Magazine/Journal	1996, 2005	0948-X-28

Subseries: Certificates

Range of Dates: 1923 - 2004

Scope and Contents Note:

Certificates document Dr. Jachimczyk's personal, educational, military, medical and legal careers. Of note are his baptismal certificate, his diplomas, and his legal and medical licenses. The oversized documents have been separated as noted in the inventory. Membership cards are included at the end of the series.

Title	Date	Location
Associations, Organizations	1945 – 1997	0948-X-29
Associations, Organizations	1972, 1978, n.d.	0095-V-01
Continuing Education, Instruction	1962 -2004, n.d.	0948-X-30
Continuing Education, Instruction	1962-2004	0095-V-02
Diplomas	1949, 1976	0948-X-31
Diplomas	1938-1969	0095-V-03
Legal License	1959-1979	0095-V-04
Medical Boards	1952- 1996	0948-X-32
Medical Boards	1952-1993	0095-V-05
Medical License	1953-2002	0948-X-33
Medical License	1949-1973	0095-V-06
Military	1948-1956	0948-X-34
Military	1953-1958	0095-V-07
Personal	1949, n.d.	0948-X-35
Personal	1923, 1985	0095-V-08
Resolutions	1982-1995	0948-X-36
Awards, Honors	1969-1995, n.d.	0948-X-37
Resolutions, Awards, Honors	1973-1995	0095-V-09
Membership Cards	1975- 2002, n.d.	0948-X-38

Series: Monographs
Size: 2 items
Range of Dates: 1959, 1980

Scope and Contents Note:

Two monographs demonstrate Dr. Jachimczyk's interest in mysteries and his relationship with Earle Stanley Gardner.

Title	Date	Location
<i>The Case of the Mythical Monkeys</i> , Earl Stanley Gardner	1959	0009-K-59
<i>Drilling for Death</i> , John Wolfe	1980	0009-K-80

Series: Photographs
Size: .25 cubic feet
Range of Dates: 1948-2004

Scope and Contents Note:

Photographs are divided into two subseries: Photoprints and Photo Albums.

Subseries: Photoprints
Range of Dates: 1948 - 2004

Photo prints document the educational and professional life of Dr. Joseph Jachimczyk. Of particular interest are his photoprints of Kanty reunions, a number of 8 x 10 photographs that were often used in media coverage of the medical examiner's office, and of the Joseph A. Jachimczyk Forensic Center. Also included are the photoprints of his military discharge and medical school diploma which were used to obtain licensure in various states.

Title	Date	Location
Dr. Joseph A. Jachimczyk - Portraits	1949-2004	0005-P-00
Kanty	1953-1992; nd	0018-P-01
Certificates	1948-1956	0018-P-02
Training, Military and Medical	ca. 1949-1954	0018-P-03

Medical Examiner	1958	0018-P-04
Medical Examiner	ca. 1965-1968; nd	0018-P-05
Dr. Joseph A. Jachimczyk	ca. 1976-2004; nd	0018-P-06
Building: Medical Examiner's Office	1983, 1991	0018-P-07
Building: Medical Examiner's Office	1991	0018-P-08
Building: Medical Examiner's Office	1991	0005-M-00

Subseries: Photo Albums

Range of Dates: ca. 1949 -1995

In addition to documenting the career of Dr. Jachimczyk, five photo albums capture doctors and employees during holiday and personal celebrations and major events for the Medical Examiner's Office. Preliminary identification of the people in the albums has been completed.

Title	Date	Location
1957-1995	1957-1995	0098-V-00
Birthday	1994, 09/15	0098-V-00
Christmas/New Year	1986	0098-V-00
Early Career	ca. 1949-1958	0098-V-00
Groundbreaking for Forensic Center	1983	0098-V-00

Series: Scrapbooks

Size: 7 volumes

Range of Dates: 1956-1988

Scope and Contents Note:

Newspaper clippings, photographs, awards, thank you notes, correspondence, and invitations in seven scrapbooks record the personal and professional life of Dr. Joseph A. Jachimczyk (1956 – 1988). Subjects include Dr. Jachimczyk's conflict with politicians, cases such as Joan Hill, Howard Hughes, Diana Wanstrath, and Elmer Wayne Henley, the rising crime rate in Houston, child abuse, AIDS, and obituaries.

Title	Date	Location
Scrapbook	1957, 04/21-1988, 06/01	007-S-07
Scrapbook	1957, 04/25-1966, 04/04	007-S-07
Scrapbook	1962-1995	007-S-08
Scrapbook	1964, 08/15-1975, 03/23	007-S-08
Scrapbook	1966, 09/19-1978, 10/14	007-S-09
Scrapbook	1975, 04/17-1982, 03/19	007-S-09
Scrapbook	1981-1984; 1956-1970	007-S-10

Series: Artifacts

Size: 18 items

Range of Dates: 1967 - 1979

Scope and Contents Note:

Plaques, desk top name plates, pins, stamps, and a mortar board provide evidence of the career and accomplishments of Dr. Joseph Jachimczyk.

Title	Date	Location
Mortar Board	n.d.	0097-V-00
Name Tag, Badge, pin	n.d.	0097-V-00
Plaques and Awards (photocopies)	1968-1990, n.d.	0948-X-39
Plaques and Awards	1967-1979	0097-V-00
Plaques and Awards (9)	1979-1995	0934-X-00
Stamps (3)	n.d.	0097-V-00
Desk Name Plates (3)	n.d.	0097-V-00