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Guide to the Marianne S. Breslin Interview, 2007

Marianne S. Breslin is a former head of the Psychosomatic Division of the Department of Psychiatry at Duke University Medical Center.

Descriptive Summary

Collection Title: Marianne S. Breslin Interview, 2007

Creator: Breslin, Marianne S.

Extent: 1 record storage box, 3 items, .25 linear feet

Processed By:

Date Completed:

Encoded By:

Biographical Note

Dr. Marianne S. Breslin received her medical education in Germany, graduating from the Medical Academy of Duesseldorf in 1946. After a residency in general surgery, internal medicine, and in thoracic surgery, she came to Presbyterian Hospital in New York City in 1951 under a Marshall Plan fellowship. She came to North Carolina with her husband in 1952, and received psychiatric residency training at the combined program of Dorothea Dix Hospital and the North Carolina Memorial Hospital of the University of North Carolina (UNC) in the 1950s. She was offered a faculty position in the Department of Psychiatry of the School of Medicine at UNC in 1960. Dr. Breslin was assistant administrator of the Adult Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic and was involved in supervision of residents in psychotherapy and family therapy. She was involved in research projects and was a member of a subcommittee to study curriculum changes in the residency training program at UNC. During this time, she also was in the psychoanalytic training program.

In 1968, Dr. Breslin resigned with the intention of entering the private practice of psychiatry. However, she received an invitation to join the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry at Duke University Medical Center. From 1968 to 1986, Dr. Breslin was associate professor of psychiatry and head of the Psychosomatic Division. During this time, she was involved in the psychiatric training programs for residents and medical students in psychosomatic medicine, and the consultation service to other psychiatric specialties. She conducted research on personality traits in stroke and heart attack patients, unresolved grief reactions in psychosomatic disorders, and the application of family therapy to psychosomatic patients.

Dr. Breslin was a consultant to Watts Hospital, John Umstead Hospital, and the Durham Veterans Hospital. She served on many committees at Duke University School of Medicine, and was a consultant to the Comprehensive Cancer Research Program and the Pain Clinic. After her retirement from Duke University School of Medicine, Dr. Breslin had a practice in general psychiatry, psychosomatic medicine, and psychoanalysis. She continued as a consultant to the Durham Veterans Hospital and served as a consultant to the Social Security Disability Determination until 2006.

Dr. Breslin has received many honors, including the Honored Teacher Award from the Duke University Medical Center's Psychiatric Residents Group. She is a distinguished life fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, the North Carolina District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association, and the North Carolina Neuropsychiatric Association, where she served as president from 1980 to 1981. She is also a life fellow of the Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine and the Southern Psychiatric Association. She has been a member of numerous other organizations, including the American Psychoanalytic Association and the International Psychoanalytic Association.

Collection Overview

Guide to the Marianne S. Breslin Interview, 2007

Contains CD and transcript of an oral history interview with Marianne S. Breslin, former head of the Psychosomatic Division of the Department of Psychiatry at Duke University Medical Center.

Online Catalog Headings

Breslin, Marianne S.

Duke University.

Duke University. Medical Center.

Duke University. Dept. of Psychiatry.

History of Medicine -- North Carolina -- Personal Narratives.

University of North Carolina Hospitals -- Anecdotes.

Women in medicine.

Oral histories.

Interviews.

Transcripts.

Related Material

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Detailed Description of the Collection

Interview on 12 June 2007

Dr. Breslin speaks about her background; her father's occupation as a horse breeder in Germany; Germany's political climate affecting her family; Nazi influence in her town; anti-Nazi sentiment after the war; extreme changes in family due to the war and politics; going to medical school in 1941; World War II's impact on her life; becoming a surgeon; her fellowship to go to the United States; coming to the United States (New York); meeting her husband; moving to Chapel Hill; complications of the fellowship program; working at Dorothea Dix Hospital as chief of the female service; choosing to change to psychiatry over surgery; Dr. Ewald Busse persuading her to come to Duke's Department of Psychiatry; heading the Division of Psychosomatic Medicine in Duke's Department of Psychiatry; other people in the department; being the first female in the Adult Psychiatry Department; the positive treatment she received as the only female; being busy; raising a large family alone; her experience with a grateful patient; psychosomatic medicine; the current trend toward medications in the field of psychiatry; Dr. Anna Friedman; Dr. Ruby Wilson; the end of clinical psychiatric nurse position; committees upon which she served in the medical center; her presidency of the North Carolina Neuropsychiatric Society; other people in other divisions in the department; the end of the Division of Psychosomatic Medicine after her retirement; her retirement; the positive aspects and accomplishments of the division; working with a patient who was afraid to fly; the death of her two husbands; her children; psychiatry in Germany; her initial interest in psychosomatic medicine; her popularity; passing the state boards in North Carolina; being the only foreigner to pass the boards in her group; taking the boards; other exams necessary to practice in the United States; her family; and social workers in Duke's Department of Psychiatry.

Box 1

Interview CD [1 CD (1 hour and 57 minutes total)]

Transcript [39 pages]

Release Form