



A history of the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases

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The New York University Hospital for Joint Diseases has enjoyed a long and distinguished history and is currently the musculoskeletal center of excellence at the NYU Medical Center. Founded by the physician brothers, Henry and Herman Frauenthal, in 1905, as the Jewish Hospital for Deformities and Joint Diseases, the Hospital began as a modest seven-bed facility in a single brownstone building in upper Manhattan. Henry Frauenthal served as the Hospital's first Physician-and Surgeon-in-Chief. The Hospital's charter mission was to treat and conduct research in acute and chronic joint conditions in children and adults, a mission that persists to this day. Within its first year, the Hospital expanded to an adjacent building and provided 9,500 treatments to more than 1,200 patients (Fig. 1). The Hospital continued this growth through 1910, when an additional building was added, expanding its capacity to 60 beds with a surgical amphitheater (Fig. 2). On the purchase of six further adjacent buildings, the hospital became one of the foremost patient care centers in the United States and received worldwide recognition. On November 14, 1921, the Hospital brownstone complex became known as the Hospital for Joint Diseases. Concomitantly, this series of internally connected buildings were razed and a new, entirely modern constructed Hospital opened in 1924 (Fig. 3). The new Hospital was enlarged to 350 beds with 100 private patient rooms, and had its own ambulance service.

The Hospital for Joint Diseases was, and continues to be, home to many of the pioneers of orthopaedic surgery. Emmanuel Kaplan, MD, was one of our first residents and is one of the founders of hand surgery. In 1924, Henry L. Jaffe, MD, joined the faculty as Director of Pathology and

Laboratories. Jahss would achieve great distinction in orthopaedics and pathology, becoming known as the "Father of Orthopaedic Pathology" due to his work on the systematic classification of bone and cartilage tumors. Fred Houdlett Albee, MD, a pioneer in bone graft surgery and spinal fusion technique, was also among the Hospital's prestigious faculty. Albee was the first to employ living bone grafts as internal splints and was President of the American Orthopaedic Association in 1929. Other eminent faculty include Leo Mayer, MD, who pioneered tendon transplantation in hand



Fig. 1. Earliest photo of the Hospital for Deformities & Joint Diseases, two brownstones interconnected, circa 1907.



Fig. 2. The expanded Hospital, which by 1910, included the numbers 1915, 1917, and 1919 Madison Avenue, New York. The Hospital would soon expand to include further adjacent brownstones.

surgery, Paul W. Lapidus, MD, widely regarded as the “Father of Foot Surgery”, and his gifted protégé, Melvin H. Jahss, MD, who authored the seminal textbook of foot surgery. This distinction of achievement in orthopaedics continues today, with leaders such as Victor H. Frankel, MD, who first brought the Ilizarov limb lengthening technique to North America, and Thomas J. Errico, MD, Chief of the Spine Service, who is the inventor of an artificial disc replacement, these among many other faculty notable accomplishments.

Education and scholarship are integral parts of our Hospital’s mission. Since its inception, the Hospital for Joint Diseases has educated many physicians, both as orthopaedic residents and within post-doctoral courses that continue to draw physicians nationwide and from other countries. In 1927, the Henry W. Frauenthal Travel Scholarship was established for study in leading European and American clinics. The Scholarship is still awarded today. The Sir Robert Jones Lecture, established in 1930 and held annually, is the oldest orthopaedic lecture series in the world. The Bulletin of the Hospital for Joint Diseases was first published, in 1940, and is the second oldest orthopaedic journal in continuous publication in the English language.

Today, the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases is located in a state-of-the-art facility in the Gramercy Park neighborhood of downtown Manhattan, New York. The new 17-story institute housed, for the first time, in 1979, all of the clinical, teaching, and research facilities of the Hospital under one roof (Fig. 4). When first completed across the street from Beth Israel Medical Center, the two facilities



Fig. 3. The new Hospital for Joint Diseases, rebuilt on the original site in upper Manhattan, opened in 1924.

provided one another with a complementary orthopaedic/medical care relationship. However, in 1988, HJD ended this affiliation and became a freestanding institution specializing in musculoskeletal disorders. In 1994, the Hospital became a sponsored organization of NYU Medical Center



Fig. 4. The Hospital for Joint Diseases, newly built in downtown Manhattan, 17th Street, opened in 1979, and became the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases in 2006.

and, in 1997, the NYU-Hospital for Joint Diseases Department of Orthopaedic Surgery was established, combining the orthopaedic departments of both NYU and HJD. Today, this department is one of the largest in the country, with 120 faculty members performing over 16,000 operative procedures annually at five institutions: the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases, NYU Medical Center's Tisch Hospital, Bellevue Hospital Center, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and Jamaica Hospital Medical Center. The residency programs of HJD and NYU School of Medicine also merged, becoming a single, comprehensive educational program with twelve residents per year, the largest such program in the country. On January 1, 2006, the two institutions completed a full asset merger, resulting in HJD becoming the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases.

The NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases has a distinguished history, serving as a prominent leader in many different areas of medicine and providing care and services in subspecialties to include joint replacement, sports medicine, the spine, the hand, shoulder, elbow, and foot/ankle, as well as offering walk-in urgent orthopaedic care (I-Care). In addition, the Hospital has the largest pediatric orthopaedic program in New York City. The Department of Rheumatology and Medicine is a nationally recognized center for the diagnosis and treatment of rheumatologic disorders such as osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, fibromyalgia, and rheumatic and connective tissue disorders. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Registry for Neonatal Lupus is also located

at NYU/HJD. The Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine offers inpatient and outpatient comprehensive rehabilitation programs for orthopaedic, rheumatologic, and neuromuscular conditions. The Department of Neurosciences provides programs in general neurology, orthopaedic neurology, pain management, multiple sclerosis, and neurorehabilitation. The Harkness Center for Dance Injuries was established to provide specialized and affordable healthcare to the New York City dance community, regardless of ability to pay. The center also features the Human Performance Laboratory, one of only twelve in the world, that allows for analysis of muscle and joint forces experienced while dancing. Finally, the hospital features the Initiative for Women with Disabilities Elly and Steve Hammerman Health and Wellness Center, a multi-disciplinary center committed to providing high-quality medical, gynecologic, and wellness services for women with disabilities.

The NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases has long served as a progressive and innovative leader in musculoskeletal care, not only in the United States but world-wide. In just one century, the Hospital has grown from a seven-bed facility in a small brownstone to a 17-story New York institution. The faculty continues to be among the most distinguished of their field. Never content with the status quo, plans are currently underway for further expansion and research, ensuring that the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases continues as a preeminent center of musculoskeletal excellence into its second century and beyond.
