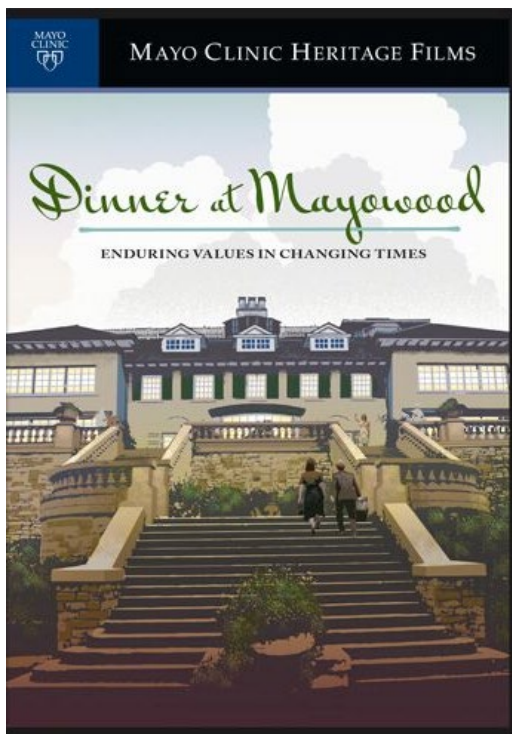




Mayo Clinic Heritage Films Discussion Guide

Dinner at Mayowood: Enduring Values in Changing Times



1940 was a pivotal year for Mayo Clinic. The Mayo brothers and Sister Joseph Dempsey, long-time administrator of Saint Marys Hospital had died the year before, the Great Depression had been a decade of unprecedented financial strain, and now a world war was looming.

This film imagines two journalists coming to Rochester, expecting to find an institution in decline. Invited to dinner at Mayowood, the home of Dr. Chuck and Alice Mayo, they meet an array of guests and discover the enduring strength of Mayo Clinic: teamwork in service to patients.

“Dinner at Mayowood” captures the spirit of perseverance, innovation and hope that has helped Mayo Clinic survive and thrive in an ever-changing world.

Discussion Questions

1. How can an institution avoid becoming too dependent on one person?
2. Why do you think Dr. Mayo invited the Sisters, the clinic’s business manager, a technician from the aeromedicine lab, a visiting researcher, and a patient to this dinner?
3. For many years, the Sisters of Saint Francis and Mayo Clinic collaborated at Saint Marys Hospital on the strength of the founders’ handshake. Do you think “handshake deals” are possible today? Have contracts replaced trust?

4. As the country was recovering from the Depression and America's involvement in a world war seemed likely, the Sisters of Saint Francis decided to proceed with the largest building project in their history. Do you agree with the premise that "we must go forward or drop backwards" even in difficult times?
5. In the film, what are some of the ways that Dr. Chuck promoted teamwork among his colleagues?
6. How can an organization manage a time of stress and crisis to emerge stronger than before?
7. Dr. Charles Mayo defined "the spirit of the clinic" as putting the collective good above individual ambitions. How would you define the animating spirit of the clinic today?