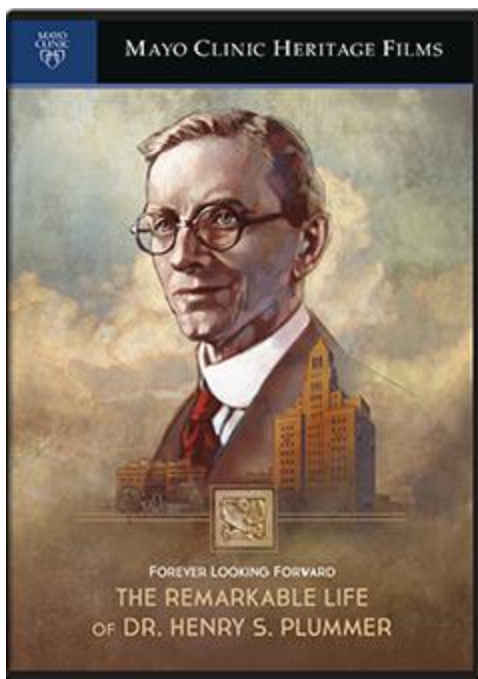




Mayo Clinic Heritage Films Discussion Guide

Forever Looking Forward: The Remarkable Life of Dr. Henry S. Plummer



Henry Plummer was a young doctor in rural Minnesota when he was invited to join the growing Mayo medical practice in 1901. Within a short time, he began making medical discoveries that helped patients everywhere and created innovative systems that shaped the future of Mayo Clinic. Dr. Plummer created the centralized medical record, which set a world standard for documenting patient care. He envisioned the first medical building – beautiful as well as efficient – to support the integrated group practice of medicine. He invented medical devices and transformed the treatment of thyroid diseases. This docudrama draws upon the memories of Dr. Plummer’s family and colleagues to create a portrait of an unforgettable character in the history of medicine and Mayo Clinic.

Discussion Questions

1. What factors led Dr. Plummer to conceive of a centralized medical record? How did he ensure that this concept would remain viable years into the future?
2. What obstacles did Dr. Plummer overcome? How have you championed a new idea or a different way of looking at an issue?
3. Dr. Plummer was a “diversified genius,” but he did not act alone. Describe the partnerships he created with colleagues.
4. In many cases, Dr. Plummer successfully contradicted conventional wisdom. How was that possible?
5. What qualities or outlook helped Dr. Plummer to be “forever looking forward”?
6. What are the benefits of a medical building being beautiful as well as functional?
7. Why was Mayo Clinic the perfect environment for a person like Dr. Henry Plummer to flourish?