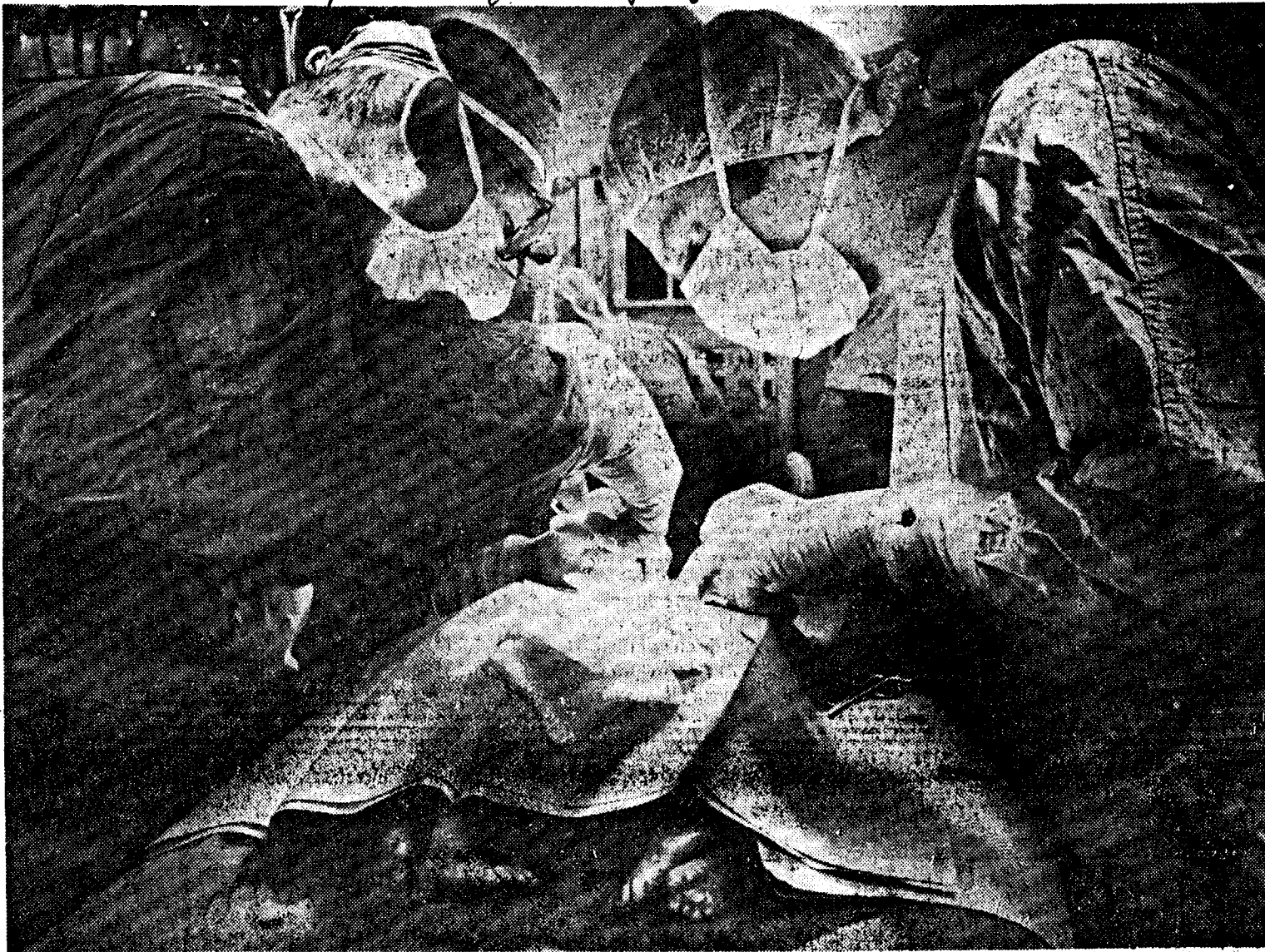


Inquirer front page - 10/12/77.



Special to The Inquirer / Ed Eckstein-Children's Hospital

Surgeons work delicately to separate Siamese twins in an operation at Children's Hospital

Joined at heart, twins severed

By Howard S. Shapiro
Inquirer Staff Writer

A girl Siamese twin, less than a month old, was in stable condition yesterday after a 20-member medical team at Children's Hospital separated her from her sister in an operation lasting more than seven hours.

The other girl died at 10:40 a.m., an hour and a quarter after surgery started.

The twins were joined from just below the collarbone to the navel, like 40 percent of all Siamese twins. What made these girls extremely unusual was that they shared a heart.

A normal heart has four chambers, but these twins had six chambers — two in the body of the girl who died, four in the body of the surviving girl.

The surgeons could not safely alter the heart, so they decided before the operation to leave the full six-chambered heart in the body of the girl who survives.

Although the family approved the operation, the physicians said that because one of the twins was certain to die, they obtained a court order Monday.

Children's Hospital aides said there had been only six known surgical separations of Siamese twins joined at the heart and that only three of those were described in medical literature. Only one person has survived.

The twins were taken into the operating room shortly after 6 a.m. yesterday, and the team began to administer anesthetics. Surgery did not begin until 9:25 a.m. Two hours



Philadelphia Inquirer / AKIRA SUWA

Afterward, nurses Debbi O'Leary (left) and Macky McDonald show tension

later, the bodies were fully separated and doctors began to build a chest wall from the remaining ribs, then stitch the surviving infant, a process that ended at about 1:30 p.m.

Dr. C. Everett Koop, chief surgeon at the hospital and leader of the team that performed the separation, said that both girls would have died in a short time if the opera-

tion had not been performed.

Even so, Dr. Koop said, the surviving girl had only a 5 percent to 10 percent chance of staying alive after the separation. "Right now, I feel very hopeful," he said at a news conference yesterday afternoon after the operation was completed.

(See TWINS on 7-A)

Joined at heart, twins severed at Children's Hospital; 1 dies

TWINS, From 1-A

At the request of the twins' parents, Dr. Koop would not supply any information about the family, including the name, and reporters were not permitted to see the surviving infant.

Koop did say that the twins had been born by cesarean section on Sept. 15, and that the mother was still recovering. The father was at the hospital during the operation, he said.

A New Jersey newspaper reported two weeks ago that the twins were born at Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch, N. J., and that the parents were residents of New Jersey. The babies had a combined weight of 8 pounds, 10 ounces at birth, and were immediately transported to the infant intensive-care unit at Children's Hospital to be treated for respiratory problems.

For two weeks, surgeons and other physicians at Children's examined the infants and designed a plan for the separation. Except for the joined heart, doctors found that each girl had most of her own organs, Dr. Koop said.

He said that the living girl weighed about 7½ pounds after the operation.

Dr. Koop, who also headed the Children's Hospital team that separated the Rodriguez twins, from the Dominican Republic, in 1974, said yesterday's operation was technically easier because not as many organs were joined.

"But this operation was fraught with far greater danger because it was the heart that was involved," he said. One of the Rodriguez girls, now 4, remains alive. The other died in an incident unrelated to the separation.

Yesterday's operation was the third separation of Siamese twins ever per-



Special to The Inquirer / Ed Eckstein, Children's Hospital

The resources of Children's Hospital are marshaled

formed at Children's Hospital. A girl also remains alive from the first operation, done in 1957.

One in every 60,000 births is Siamese twins. The name comes from the first widely publicized pair, which was from Siam and became a circus act. Few ever live long enough to undergo a separation operation.

Dr. Russell C. Raphaely, the Children's Hospital anesthesiologist responsible for monitoring the living

girl's safety, said she was breathing yesterday afternoon with the help of a machine that fed air through a hole in her windpipe.

If doctors determine that the amount of oxygen in the infant's blood is appropriate, they will remove the machine today, he said. The infant, who was described as not heavily bandaged, remained under anesthetics late yesterday.