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HUSBAND-AND-WIFE EDITORIAL TEAM AT THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE: LIFETIME CRUSADERS FOR PHYSICIAN-INDUSTRY INDEPENDENCE

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Dr. Arnold “Bud” Relman was the renowned editor-in-chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) from 1977 to 1991.¹ He died on June 17, 2014, his ninety-first birthday. Dr. Marcia Angell, the publication’s only female editor-in-chief, served in that role from 1999 to 2000, before its current editor-in-chief, Dr. Jeffrey Drazen, took the helm. In a recent NEJM editorial on the late Relman, there was a sentence that read, “In his writing, he usually sought the expert counsel of Marcia Angell, who was later also named the journal’s editor-in-chief.”¹ However, no mention was made of the fact that Angell was Relman’s wife. Few people, including myself, were aware of such a relationship; I only learned of it after reading Altman’s article in *The New York Times*.² In her article in the August 14, 2014 issue of *The New York Review of Books*, Angell wrote that “Bud and I lived together for twenty happy years, the last five as husband and wife.”³

Collectively, Relman and Angell filled the top editorial posts at the NEJM for almost a quarter of a century, becoming “American medicine’s royal couple,” as the physician and journalist Abigail Zugar wrote in *The New York Times* in 2012.⁴ They met when she was a third-year medical student and he was a professor at Boston University School of Medicine, where he began his research career in nephrology and electrolyte and acid-base imbalance.

Relman and Angell shared a George Polk Award, one of journalism’s highest prizes, for a 2002 article published in *The New Republic* that documented how drug companies invest far more money in advertising and lobbying than in research and

development.⁴ It was a truly groundbreaking piece of writing, especially for cardiologists and cardiac surgeons who are the principal prescribers and consumers of various cardiovascular drugs and devices throughout the world. Relman continued to champion this issue on his death bed, as evidenced by his posthumous articles in the August 2014 issue of *The JAMA Internal Medicine*⁵ and August 6, 2014 issue of *JAMA*.⁶

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