

BERNADINE HEALY, M.D.  
AUGUST 4, 1944 – AUGUST 6, 2011



We would like to dedicate this issue of the *Methodist DeBakey Cardiovascular Journal* to Dr. Bernadine Healy, a visionary leader in the field of biomedical sciences and the first female director of the National Institutes of Health.

A world-known cardiologist, scientist, and educator, Dr. Healy held a number of prominent leadership positions during her extraordinary life. She was appointed by President Ronald Reagan in 1984 as the deputy director of the White House Office of Science and Policy and subsequently served on the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology during the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush. Healy served as the dean of the College of Medicine at Ohio State University, and in 2001 as President and CEO of the American Red Cross, she commanded relief efforts after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Among her other professional affiliations, Dr. Healy has served on the board of governors of the American College of Cardiology and was elected president of both the American Federation of Clinical Research and the American Heart Association. As American Heart Association president, she launched the Women and Minorities Leadership Task Force and the Women and Heart Disease nationwide campaign.

One of the major accomplishments during Dr. Healy's term as NIH director was the establishment of the Women's Health Initiative, which greatly changed the landscape of women's health research and has had an extensive effect on public health. This massive and far-reaching health study investigated heart disease, breast cancer, osteoporosis, and colon cancer in more than 150,000 postmenopausal women. When referring to this program during her speech before the U.S. Congress, Dr. Healy announced, "We need a moon walk for women." She saw the potential of genomic research and human genome sequencing to revolutionize medicine, and her strong support and insight led to the establishment of an intramural genomic research program at NIH. She was also a great supporter of technological innovations in biomedical sciences.

Dr. Healy will always be remembered as a visionary, courageous leader and a brilliant and dedicated physician and scientist.

— *Biana Godin and Mauro Ferrari*

I was fortunate to meet Dr. Healy in 1999, when she was dean of the College of Medicine at Ohio State University. One meeting was enough to convince me to leave a tenured faculty position at the University of California at Berkeley to join her at OSU. Such was her charisma, her vision, her unbounded energy and fearless leadership — qualities that were recognized by all and that most certainly had a profound influence on everything I have done since meeting her. At OSU, I started a new program in biomedical engineering, reporting jointly to her and the dean of engineering — which was a structural innovation in itself, another product of her creativity and a model that has since been adopted by many national and international programs at the interface of medicine and technology. It was not a year after starting that joint program that she fell ill to the diseases that eventually took her away from us. I join the many who miss her deeply and will carry forever the memory of her extraordinary intellect, vision, and passion for making the world a better place for all.

— *Mauro Ferrari*