

Bernadine P Healy

Controversial advocate for women's health

As a girl growing up in New York City in the 1950s, Bernadine Healy, the daughter of second generation Irish-American parents, wanted to be a nun. But at 12 years old, she changed her mind, deciding that studying medicine would be the best way to use her "God given talents" to help people.

A wise decision, as being a nun would have been extremely difficult for Healy, a staunch feminist who throughout her life fought for causes she believed were right. Later in life she noted that a big inspiration in her life was the 1956 novel *A Nun's Story* by Kathryn Hulme, about a Belgian nun who grapples with her desire to leave the convent for the intellectual and personal freedom of being a medical nurse.

First in battle

Healy's husband, Floyd D Loop, a cardiac surgeon, said that his wife had many times been "first in battle and the last to leave the field," adding, "She was all about honesty, human rights, and fairness. While most of us speak but don't act, she did both—to great advantage for so many."

In 1991 she was appointed by President George H Bush as director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the first woman to hold the position. True to her nature, she proceeded to shake things up. She went before Congress and, similar to President John Kennedy's declaration in the early 1960s to put man on the moon by the end of the decade, she declared, "We need a moon walk for women."

She announced the Women's Health Initiative, a \$625m study involving 150 000 women that focused on strategies for preventing heart disease, osteoporosis, breast cancer, and colorectal cancer. She also ordered that both men and women participate in clinical trials funded by the NIH about conditions that affect both sexes.

Francis S Collins, the current NIH director who became acquainted with Healy in 1992 when she persuaded him to leave a professorship at the University of Michigan to lead NIH's role in the International Human Genome Project, described her as a visionary, saying: "She was never afraid to speak her mind, even if her opinion was unpopular. Today, as a result of her tenacity, we are seeing major advances in women's health." In addition to being a highly cited clinical researcher, he said she also was "a superb physician and administrator. I, and countless others, will always be grateful for

her dedication to medicine and medical research."

Bernadine Patricia Healy was born on 2 August 1944 in New York City, the second of four daughters whose parents ran a small perfume business from their home in Queens. After she decided that she would rather be a doctor than a nun, her father pulled her from parochial school against the advice of a priest and enrolled her in the elite Hunter College High School in Manhattan, from where she graduated in 1962 as valedictorian.

She then graduated in 1965 from Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, and from Harvard Medical School in 1970, which she followed by an internship and residency in cardiology at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. After two years at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at the NIH, she returned to Johns Hopkins in 1976, rising to full professor by 1982. She was also director of the coronary care unit (1977-1984) and assistant dean for postdoctoral programmes and faculty development (1979-1984).

A staunch supporter of the Republican Party, Healy left Johns Hopkins in 1984 to become President Ronald Reagan's deputy science adviser at the White House. She left the next year to lead the research institute at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, staying until her appointment in 1991 as NIH director. She left NIH in 1993 after President Bill Clinton's election and in 1994 ran unsuccessfully for the US Senate. In 1995 she was appointed dean of Ohio State University College of Medicine and Public Health and professor of medicine, serving simultaneously in 1998 and 1999 as president of the American Heart Association.

On Valentine's day 1999 she passed out at

home and was rushed by ambulance to the Cleveland Clinic, at the time led by her husband, Dr Loop. Tests showed a tumor. She underwent treatment and was able to beat the cancer—for a while. In late 1999 she became the first doctor to be named head of the American Red Cross, and

controversy followed. She set out to reform what she saw as a disorganised and bloated organisation, but various chapters and long term staff members resisted her efforts. She also withheld funding to the International Red Cross to protest against its exclusion of Israel's service, the Red Shield of David, over its non-standard symbol.

After the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, the American Red Cross came under political fire for its handling of blood and cash donations to the new Liberty

Fund, which some thought should be restricted only to victims of 9/11. Healy stepped down, and in subsequent years, while still battling cancer, worked as a columnist for the magazine *US News and World Report* and as a commentator on television. She wrote a book: *Living Time: Faith and Facts to Transform Your Cancer Journey*.

Dr Loop, who described his wife as a "radiant beauty," said she was sometimes quite ill during the final years. "But on Monday mornings she would always find a way to recover and would say to me, 'It's show time,' and off she would go," he said, adding, "She kept that 1000 watt smile all the way to the end."

In addition to her husband, Healy leaves two daughters.

Ned Stafford

Bernadine P Healy, cardiologist (b 1944; q 1970, Harvard), died on 6 August 2011 from brain cancer.

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TERRY ASHE/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

She was all about honesty, human rights, and fairness. While most of us speak but don't act, she did both—to great advantage for so many

Gavin James Brown



Former consultant physician Belford Hospital, Fort William (b 1948; q Edinburgh 1972; FRCPEd), d 6 May 2011.

After undergraduate and postgraduate training in Edinburgh, Gavin James Brown specialised in cardiology and care of the elderly medicine. From 1983 to 1996, when ill health forced early retirement, he was the first consultant physician at Belford Hospital. For most of that time he was singlehanded, yet he established a much-valued medical service in general medicine, cardiology, and care of the elderly, greatly improving the welfare of the West Highland population. After retiring, he was an occasional locum consultant in Highland and Argyll regions and trained in occupational health, working in Fort William and later Inverness. He had a dry sense of humour, was always meticulously dressed, and loved gardening and classic cars. He leaves a wife, Donna.

James Douglas

Andrew Henderson

Neil Dewhurst

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Francis Caird



Former professor of geriatric medicine University of Glasgow (b 1928; q Oxford 1953), d 26 June 2011. Francis Caird won a scholarship to Oxford to read classics. He switched to medicine and gained first class honours. In 1967 he became senior lecturer in geriatric medicine at

Glasgow and was appointed professor in 1979 until his retirement in 1994. He enjoyed combining clinical work with teaching and research. He regularly contributed to journals and wrote numerous books, often in collaboration with colleagues. He supported the development of multidisciplinary teams in the care of elderly people. After retirement in Oxford he continued to work with the Parkinson's Disease Society and as associate editor for *Age and Ageing*. He retained his love of the classics, always enjoying reading ancient Greek. Predeceased by his wife, Angela, he leaves three children and six grandchildren.

Katie Caird

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Julius Cowen



Former general practitioner Palmers Green, London, and captain Royal Army Medical Corps (b 1909; q Glasgow 1935), died from a brainstem stroke on 25 June 2011. After a house surgical job in Weston-super-Mare, Julius Cowen was assistant general practitioner in Carfin and Newcastle before the second world war. In 1939 he took up a post in the East End of London, working through the Blitz. He was in the Royal Army Medical Corps in North Africa during 1942-3, being taken prisoner during 1943-5. After the war he was a singlehanded general practitioner in north London for 36 years, his dedication, clinical acumen, and professionalism making him a true pillar of the community. He was a BMA member for 76 years. Predeceased by Lily, his wife of 68 years, he leaves two children and two grandchildren.

Jonathan Birns

David Cowen

Mark Walport

Sam Walport

Cite this as: [BMJ 2011;343:d5636](#)

John Gloster

Emeritus professor of experimental ophthalmology University of London (b 1922; q Cambridge/St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, 1946; MD, PhD), died from bronchopneumonia and lymphoplasmacytic lymphoma on 28 May 2011.

After house posts, John Gloster worked in Nottingham and Birmingham Eye Hospitals, where he researched miners' nystagmus and retinitis pigmentosa. In 1954 he gained a research appointment on glaucoma with the Medical Research Council at the Institute of Ophthalmology, where he worked until his retirement in 1982. He was vice dean for six years and later dean. He was also an honorary consultant at Moorfields Eye Hospital in charge of the glaucoma clinic. In retirement, John became an avid horticulturalist, exhibiting nationally. He leaves Margery, his wife of 64 years; two sons; and one grandson.

Peter Gloster

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Thomas Henry Christopher Lewis



Former consultant physician Vancouver General Hospital and University of British Columbia (b 1923; q University College Hospital, London, 1948; FRCPC), died from heart disease on 9 September 2010.

Thomas Henry Christopher Lewis ("Chris") was the son of Sir Thomas Lewis, cardiologist and clinical scientist (*BMJ* 1945;i:498), who gave him a love of natural history and fishing. After house jobs in London and national service in Europe, Chris was a ship's doctor for two years before emigrating to Canada in 1956. He completed his training at Vancouver General Hospital, specialising in general internal medicine and geriatric medical

practice until retirement in 1990. Chris had a lifelong interest in art and trained as a sculptor when he was 50. His works were shown throughout British Columbia in a juried travelling exhibit. He leaves a wife, Helga, and four children.

Graham Clay

Arthur Hollman

Cite this as: [BMJ 2011;343:d5557](#)

Harold Thomas Swan



Former consultant haematologist Sheffield (b 1922; q Edinburgh 1944; MD, FRCP, FRCPath, Hon DLitt Sheffield), d 18 June 2011.

After qualification, Harold Thomas Swan joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and was senior medical officer to a flotilla sweeping Japanese mines. President of the British Society of Haematology and the Scottish Society of the History of Medicine, he was also clinical dean at Sheffield medical school. He published in *Medical History* on the early use of penicillin in Sheffield, as well as on the history of medicine in Sheffield. He assembled and catalogued extensive historic material when the Sheffield Royal Hospital and Sheffield Royal Infirmary closed. He sang with the Sheffield Bach Choir and with the choir of St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, during retirement. He leaves a wife, Elizabeth, three sons, and four grandchildren.

Derek Holdsworth

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