

Women in Thoracic Surgery and the Thoracic Surgery Foundation for Research and Education

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Women in thoracic surgery have been important in the founding and subsequent development of The Thoracic Surgery Foundation for Research and Education. In 1984, Dr Martin McKneally first proposed the creation of a foundation to support research and education in thoracic surgery. In 1989, the Society of Thoracic Surgeon Education and Research Foundation was established. Because of limited financial support, its programs were minimal. In 1992, Dr Eugene Braunwald, desiring to establish a memorial to his wife, Dr Nina Starr Braunwald, was directed to the Foundation. Dr Braunwald, family, friends, and colleagues of the late Nina Starr Braunwald provided the Foundation with a major gift to establish the Nina Starr Braunwald Memorial Fund. This provided the impetus for support from the four major thoracic surgery organizations: The American Association for Thoracic Surgery (AATS), The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), The Southern Thoracic Surgery Association (STSA), and The Western Thoracic Surgery Association (WTSA), and The Society of Thoracic Surgeons for Education and Research was reorganized as The Thoracic Surgery Foundation for Research and Education to serve all of thoracic surgery.

Nina Starr Braunwald was not only an outstanding pioneer woman thoracic surgeon, but an outstanding surgeon among all surgeons. Dr Braunwald was born in New York in 1928. She had her undergraduate and medical education at New York University and embarked on her surgical training at Bellevue Hospital. She completed her general surgery training at Georgetown University Medical Center where she also obtained a Master of Science Degree in Surgery, working as a postdoctoral fellow in the laboratory of Dr Charles Hufnagel. Her cardiothoracic surgery training was accomplished at the National Heart Institute under Dr Andrew Morrow. In 1961, she became the first woman to be certified by the American Board of Thoracic Surgery.

Doctor Braunwald's career included appointments as Deputy Chief, The Clinic of Surgery at the National Heart Institute, Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of California at San Diego, where she established that institution's first cardiac surgical program. In 1972, she accepted an appointment as Associate Professor in Sur-

gery at Harvard with staff appointments at the Brigham and Women's, Boston Children's, and the West Roxbury Veteran's Administration Hospital. Throughout Dr Braunwald's career, she was recognized as a true academic surgeon with achievements and contributions in research, clinical surgery, and education. Many of the current leaders of thoracic surgery owe much of their career success to their association with Nina Braunwald.

Doctor Braunwald's bibliography of over 150 publications delineates her interests and contributions to cardiac surgery. These include measurement of extracellular fluid compartments, basic studies in tissue transplantation, and, most importantly, her pioneering work in the design and fabrication of mechanical heart valves. This work led to her performing the first successful mitral valve replacement with a prosthetic valve.

Doctor Braunwald was recognized and honored by many organizations. She received the Distinguished Member Award of The Association of Women's Surgeons and was the first woman elected to membership in The American Association for Thoracic Surgery.

The Nina Starr Braunwald Memorial Fund provides research fellowships and career development awards for women in thoracic surgery. This fund of The Thoracic Surgery Foundation has grown to over \$2,000,000 and is now sufficient to ensure these awards in perpetuity, a most appropriate memorial to an outstanding thoracic surgeon. Since 1993, the Foundation has made research awards to eight women: four Nina Braunwald Research Fellowships, three Nina Braunwald Career Development Awards, and one Thoracic Surgery Foundation Fellowship.

Jennifer D. Walker, MD

Doctor Walker was the first recipient of a 2-year Nina Braunwald Research Fellowship in 1993. As a general surgical resident at the Medical University of South Carolina, working under the direction of Dr Fred Crawford, Dr Walker studied the 3, 5, 3', Triiodo-L-thyronine on myocyte function and myocyte function and structure in dilated cardiomyopathy. These studies resulted in several presentations and publications. Dr Walker is currently Chief Resident in Cardiothoracic Surgery at the Massachusetts General Hospital.

Elaine E. Tseng, MD

Doctor Tseng received a 2-year Braunwald Fellowship in 1995 to study the role of nitric oxide in mediating neuro-

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logic injury during hypothermia circulatory arrest at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where she is currently a resident in cardiothoracic surgery.

Elizabeth Northrop Morgan, MD

Doctor Morgan, as a senior cardiothoracic research fellow, was awarded a 2-year Braunwald Fellowship in 1998 to study ischemia and reperfusion in ischemia-reperfusion injury at the University of Washington Medical School. She has subsequently changed careers from cardiac surgery to ophthalmology.

Katherine Quadracci Flores, MD

Doctor Flores, a general surgery resident at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, was awarded a 2-year Braunwald Fellowship in 1999 to study the molecular revascularization at the Brigham and Women's Hospital. After completion of her fellowship, she will return to complete her surgical training at Columbia.

Melina R. Kibbe, MD

Doctor Kibbe was awarded a 2-year Braunwald Fellowship in 1999 to study the prevention of intimal hyperplasia with iNOS gene therapy at the University of Pittsburgh.

Margaret Dale Allen, MD

In 1995, Dr Allen was the first recipient of a 2-year Braunwald Career Development Award. Her research has been in the area of gene therapy in transplantation. Dr Allen is currently Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the University of Washington's School of Medicine.

Mary C. Mancini, MD

Doctor Mancini received a Braunwald Career Development Award in 1997. During the period of her award, she completed her Doctorate in Anatomy and Cellular Biology and has studied the role of platelet factor in allograft vascular disease at Louisiana State University Health Services Center, where she is currently Professor of Surgery and Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery.

Patricia A. Thistlethwaite, MD

Doctor Thistlethwaite was awarded a Braunwald Career Development Award in 1997 to study the expression of

angiogenesis factor in the heart by adenovirus-mediated gene therapy at the University of California, San Diego, where she is currently Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery.

Julie R. Glasson, MD

Doctor Glasson was the first recipient of a Thoracic Surgery Foundation Research Fellowship in 1993. Dr Glasson studied left ventricular and mitral subvalvular mechanics and geometry in acute mitral regurgitation at Stanford University School of Medicine, where she is currently completing her surgical training.

The Board of Directors of The Thoracic Surgery Foundation is responsible for the development program, its operation, and allocation of Foundation funds. Membership is composed of 16 members who are nominated by the AATS (6), STS (6), STSA (2), and the WTSA (2). In January 2000, Dr Valerie W. Rusch from Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, having been nominated by the AATS, was elected to the Board. Dr Rusch is the first woman to serve in this capacity.

The Research Committee of The Thoracic Surgery Foundation has the responsibility for review of all research applications and recommending to the Board those to be funded. Drs Mary C. Mancini and Sara J. Shumway currently serve on this important committee. Drs Lynda L. Mickleborough, Valerie W. Rusch, and Julie A. Swain have completed terms on the committee.

The Finance Committee is responsible for the Foundation's budget and has oversight of the investment program. Drs Renee S. Hartz and Carolyn E. Reed currently serve on this committee.

Support from thoracic surgeons, our sponsoring organizations, industry, and friends has allowed the Foundation to develop programs in addition to the research program. The Foundation, with the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, has established an Executive Course in Health Care Policy Education, which has been attended by over 450 individuals, of which 179 were thoracic surgeons. Women surgeons were well represented in this group, and 5 of the 68 Alley-Sheridan Scholarships have been awarded to women.

The Thoracic Surgery Foundation for Research and Education represents and serves all of thoracic surgery and recognizes the contributions of all segments of our specialty in its growth, development, and current support of its programs.