Joanna M. Cain (1950 -)

Joanna M. Cain is an internationally known physician, teacher, and researcher in women's health and gynecologic oncology. Cain joined the faculty of the Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in 2001 as professor and chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She worked to bring both top-notch researchers and clinical trials (research studies on new treatments) to the state, giving women in Oregon access to cutting-edge medical advances.

In 2006, Cain became the Julie Neupert Scott Director of the OHSU Center for Women's Health. Under her leadership, the center was named one of twenty-one National Centers of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2003. In 2008, Cain was named a "Local Legend" by the U.S. National Library of Medicine after being nominated by Congressman David Wu for her leadership in Oregon medicine.

Born in 1950 in Wapato, Washington, Cain attended the University of Washington (UW) as an undergraduate and received her M.D. degree from Creighton University School of Medicine in 1977. She completed a residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the UW School of Medicine and was the first woman to be awarded a fellowship in gynecologic oncology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. She served on the faculty of both the UW School of Medicine and the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Nationally, Cain has been active in discussions to develop basic women's health curricula for U.S. medical schools. She helped craft the "Women's Health Care Competencies for Medical Students" promulgated by the Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics (APGO). She was the first woman to serve as president of the APGO and of the Council of University Chairs of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and the first American and first woman to chair the Committee for Ethics in Women's Health of the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO). She also chaired the FIGO Committee for International Cervical Cancer Prevention.

Cain's research interests include gender-based medicine, pain management, medical ethics, and health policy. Born near the Yakama Indian Reservation, Cain experienced firsthand the difficulties of delivering healthcare in rural settings. She is committed to community outreach, including free public health screenings, and was an enthusiastic supporter of the OHSU Free Friday screening programs established by the Center for Women's Health in 2007. Cain helped lead the first conference to focus on the delivery of women's healthcare in rural settings, developed by the U.S. Office of Women's Health and the Jacobs Institute for Women's Health in 2001. She is the author or co-author of nearly a hundred articles and more than forty book chapters and has edited or co-edited five books.

In 2004, Cain was named a member of the Arnold P. Gold Foundation's Gold Humanism Honor Society, which recognizes physicians who embody the values of humanism and professionalism within the field of medicine and its constituent institutions. In June 2008, she left OHSU for a position at Brown University's Warren Alpert Medical School.

Written by Sara Piasecki

Further Reading:

Local Legends. "Joanna M. Cain, M.D." *National Library of Medicine.* http://www.nlm.nih.gov/locallegends/Biographies/Cain_Joanna.html.

O'Neill, Patrick. "Joanna Cain: through excellence and empathy, she heals and leads." *Oregonian*, Dec. 22, 2003, A1, A7.

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