



# Dedication to Dr. Mary Ann Keenan



It is a great honor for us to dedicate this year's edition of *The University of Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Journal* to one of the most caring and compassionate physicians we have ever known. How does one summarize the life and contribution of an individual such as Mary Ann Keenan in the short format allowed to us by this Journal? Though we are only two of the many lives Dr. Keenan has touched in her career, we hope to convey the positive impact she has had on us and the contributions she has made to our careers. Mary Ann Keenan is an individual whose legacy is cemented in the patients she has helped, the residents she has trained, and the books and scientific articles she has published. As such we are pleased to take this opportunity to commemorate her contribution to her students, our department, and her field of Neuro-Orthopaedics with this short discourse.

Dr. Keenan completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1971. She began medical school at the Medical College of Pennsylvania (MCP) in 1972, the same year that congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment, which is a remarkable coincidence given that she was destined to change the field of medicine. She graduated from MCP in 1976, and then completed her internship and orthopaedic residency at Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia. She next went on to pursue two fellowships at Rancho Los Amigos in California including neuro-orthopaedics and total joint arthroplasty under the tutelage of such mentors as Douglas Gartland and Jacqueline Perry. She began her academic career at the University of Southern California and practiced there for the next eight years until she returned to Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia as Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery in 1990. This was an early sign of her true pioneering nature as she became the first female chair of an orthopaedic department in the United States, a position she held until 2003. She was active nationally in the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery and the American Orthopaedic Association having held leadership roles in each. In 2003, when she joined the faculty at Penn, she was an established thought-leader and an internationally recognized clinician. In the process, she became the first woman ever to be named a professor of orthopaedic surgery at the University of Pennsylvania, the first orthopaedic department in the country.

We specifically recall our first encounters with Dr. Keenan during the interview process for the Orthopaedic Residency at Penn many years ago. She had a no-nonsense approach to orthopaedics which belied her immense intellect. One of the characteristics that most attracted so many of us to Penn was embodied by Dr. Keenan. She viewed the patient as a whole, and surgery as only one means to an end. The function of the patient was supreme, not the number of screws, the tensile qualities of the implant, or some other esoteric metric. She also was revolutionary in her understanding that surgery is sometimes a more conservative and cost-effective treatment than non-operative management.

Since we have known her, Dr. Keenan has always been the consummate scientist with a persistently inquisitive approach to surgery. She is intensely critical of her results, and always seeking to

improve her techniques, to the benefit of her patients. Crafted in the mold of Charles Neer and Ernest Codman, she embodied the idea of a surgeon-scientist, long before this became a popular pursuit. Indeed, she has published over 80 peer reviewed manuscripts, 50 book chapters and 3 books. Her publications demonstrate a body of work that is focused on and defines clinical and basic science in the field of the orthopaedic management of neurologic injury. As such, it represents a logical and complete body of work that formulates the foundation and methodology of the field of Neuro-Orthopaedics. Dr. Keenan was an investigator on many federal and privately funded grants with total annual direct costs in the millions of dollars. She won the Jacqueline Perry award six times and was also an honored recipient of the Vernon Nickel award. She served as Editor-in-Chief of the online text version of Orthopedics, as section editor for Orthopedic Knowledge Update, as Chief of the Rehabilitation section of Orthopedics Today, and as an editorial board member of the American Journal of Orthopedics, in addition to serving as peer reviewer for countless journals.

Her teaching was likewise organized and visionary. She has presented visiting professorship lectures around the world. She has taught courses in both medical and nursing schools along with physical therapy programs. She was program director for the Albert Einstein Orthopaedic Residency Program. She taught weekly motion analysis conference and provided clinical teaching for residents in medicine, orthopaedics and physical medicine and rehabilitation. She also served as Vice Chair for Medical Education in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery here at Penn and played a critical role in resident selection.

It has been said that "no matter how famous you are in orthopaedics, you are only famous in orthopaedics." Not surprisingly, Dr. Keenan has also been the exception to this rule. In 2007, she was honored as one of the 75 greatest living Philadelphians (not doctors, mind you, ALL Philadelphians). She has been listed numerous times as a Top Doctor in Philadelphia Magazine and in America's Top Doctors. Dr. Keenan crossed the line into general fame with these events, and was honored by the *Ladies Home Journal* in their first Annual Health Care Breakthrough award. This publication is distributed to 14 million households, over 350 times the circulation of *the Journal of Bone and Joint surgery (Am)*.

Despite these honors, accolades, and accomplishments, Dr. Keenan's biggest assets cannot be written in the lines of a Curriculum Vitae. Her caring and compassionate nature along with her dedication to her patients, her students, and her chosen field of Neuro-Orthopaedics have compelled us to gratefully dedicate this edition of *The University of Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Journal* to Professor Mary Ann Keenan. Her contributions to our careers cannot be overstated as she has provided us and all of her residents throughout her career with mentorship and caring that one could only expect from a parent. Those of us who had the privilege of being her students will undoubtedly be reminded of Dr. Keenan in those poignant moments of our lives and careers when routine is interrupted by the opportunity to be extraordinary.

—Keith Baldwin and Surena Namdari