

REMEMBERING INFLUENTIAL WOMEN



Sample obituary and eulogy

From the obituary of Dame Beulah Bewley

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/feb/22/dame-beulah-bewley-obituary>

Beulah Bewley, who has died aged 88, reached the top of the medical profession and cleared a path for other female doctors to follow. As treasurer of the General Medical Council (1992-99), she encouraged the organisation to take on more women – and lobbied council members of royal medical colleges to increase their previously insignificant female intake.

Yet Bewley's career only really took off after she was 40 – by which time she had five children under 11 – when she applied to go on a new MSc course in social medicine at the London School of Hygiene, run by the celebrated Professor Jerry Morris. Her research project on smoking among primary school children – which made the link between cigarettes, poor attainment and lung disease – was later expanded for a medical degree. It led to a salaried post at St Thomas' hospital.

She was involved with Action on Smoking and Health – and in 1996 became the president of the Medical Women's Federation. In that role, determined to get more women into positions of power, she nobbled powerful people at formal dinners, urging them to include women on their councils. She also implored female medical professionals to be pushier.



rbl.org.uk/thankyou

REMEMBERING INFLUENTIAL WOMEN



From a eulogy about Barbara McClintock by Howard Green

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/medicine/1983/mcclintock/article/>

To paraphrase George Orwell, every person is unique, but some are more unique than others. There has never been anyone like Barbara McClintock in this world, nor ever will be. She was not simply a representative of a type. Some have considered her as an eccentric, others as a heroine of science, and still others as a model to be imitated. I would like to tell you how I think of her.

Barbara McClintock was a woman who rejected a woman's life for herself. She began to do it as a small child and never deviated. Her childhood was not a happy one, and perhaps this provided the force, the moral tension that was so strong in her and so necessary for the life she lived. And we must not forget that at the foundation of every creative life there lies a sense of personal inadequacy that energizes the struggle. This sense was strong in Barbara.

Barbara was successful in science at an early age and received general recognition at the time. But later, during the fifties and sixties, when she was doing her most original work, she was ignored to such an extent that she did not even want to publish. From time to time, her morale was low, even though she was utterly confident of her most important discovery: the mobility of genetic elements. We are all, unfortunately, dependent on recognition. We grow with it and suffer without it.

There are some for whom life is mainly serious and there are others for whom life is mainly laughter. Awful are those lives that are all one or all the other. Barbara took life mainly as serious, but she appreciated good laughs and we had many together.

I can say that knowing Barbara has been one of the great experiences of my life and the fact that she is gone makes me think of an extinct species or a miraculous creation that will never again be seen in the world. There are scientists whose discoveries greatly transcend their personalities and their humanity. But those in the future who will know of Barbara only her discoveries will know only her shadow. If she had made no important discoveries, I would feel about her almost as I do now. Those of us who knew her will preserve their memory of her uniqueness and marvel at what genes and experience gave to her alone.



rbl.org.uk/thankyou