

## EDUCATION UPDATE ONLINE

*Education News Today For A Better World Tomorrow!*

### WOMEN SHAPING HISTORY 2014

Margaret I. Cuomo, M.D.


#### What has inspired your current career path?

As an elementary school student, I was fascinated by the human body and how it works. Reading books about medicine and the pioneering women and men in science who changed the course of history became a passion. I especially admired Madame Marie Curie for her courage and dedication. A high school research paper assignment lead me to research the field of pathology: the study of the causes of diseases and their effects on people. That knowledge inspired me to pursue a summer internship in the pathology laboratory of a busy hospital in Queens, New York. I entered college as a pre-med student, and have been guided throughout my medical career by dedicated doctors and researchers. Ultimately, I chose to become a diagnostic radiologist, a doctor who specializes in the diagnosis of diseases through the use of X-rays, ultrasound, CT scans, MRI, and nuclear medicine studies. Radiology is an exciting field, because it applies cutting-edge technology and scientific research to the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases.

#### What are some of the greatest challenges you've faced? How did you overcome them?

The medical profession presents a challenging, and often daunting, experience. Unlike other professions, a physician has responsibility for the health and well-being of her patients, and that is an awesome privilege. As a medical student and intern, it was heart-breaking to realize that some patients would die even though they had received state-of-the art treatments. It is an unforgettable experience to follow a person to the end of life. As a radiologist, I often performed interventional procedures to perform a biopsy under the guidance of a CT scan or ultrasound scan or mammogram. Many of those patients were diagnosed with cancer or AIDS, and some of them died. Each physician requires a core of inner strength, and that has sustained me throughout my career. The loving support of my family is essential to the maintenance of balance in my life.

#### What are some of the accomplishments you are most proud of?



My family is my most precious priority. My husband, Howard Maier, and my daughters, Christina and son-in-law, Paul, my daughter Marianna, and my son, Pablo, bring me the most joy and pride. Through my work as a physician and author (*A World Without Cancer*, published by Rodale, 2012), and speaker, I am able to reach people across the country. People everywhere are eager to hear how they prevent cancer, heart disease, diabetes and other diseases by changing the way they eat, drink, exercise and eliminating harmful chemicals from their personal care products and household cleaning agents. Scientific research indicates that over 50 percent of all cancer is preventable by applying what we know right now. That fact is a revelation to many Americans, and I am delighted to be able to help them change their lives for the better.

### **Who have been the most influential mentors in your life?**

My grandparents, Immacolata and Andrea Cuomo, and Mary and Charles Raffa, had a profound effect on my development as a child and adolescent. As immigrants from Italy, my grandparents suffered and sacrificed to create opportunities for their children and grandchildren. I learned that diligence, perseverance, and integrity are the keys to success. At the same time, my grandparents enjoyed life, and focused on simple and wholesome pleasures. Sharing a hearty and healthful meal with family members, going to the beach or lake in the summertime, celebrating holidays together with love and good will - these are the happy and memorable moments that I will cherish forever. My grandparents considered it a great honor and privilege to be American citizens, and they inspired their children and grandchildren to cherish that privilege. My parents, Mario and Matilda Cuomo are examples of excellence in public service. Each of their five children have been inspired by their example. Today, my brother, Governor Andrew Cuomo, is leading New York with courage and integrity, and he is an inspiration to me. For twenty years, I have been inspired by my friend, Dr. Pola Rosen, truly a "woman shaping history." Pola courageously established the award-winning Education Update without prior experience in publishing a newspaper. Now reaching over 100,000 readers per issue, and 4 million page views per year on the web, Education Update provides information and thought-provoking articles in many areas. Like Eleanor Roosevelt, Pola Rosen believes that "You must do the thing you think you cannot do." Pola's determination, dedication and compassion have benefited us all. Brava, Pola!

### **What would you describe as a turning point in your life?**

Marrying my husband, Howard Maier, was pivotal. My husband and I form a life-enhancing team for our family and ourselves. Howard has encouraged my efforts in medicine, education, and the arts. I am grateful to Howard for his enthusiastic and loving support of all my endeavors.

## What are your goals for the future?

My goal is to continue to communicate the message that over 50 percent of all cancer is preventable. All of the “stakeholders” must be involved in this effort, including government, public health, industry, education, environmentalists, and individuals of all ages. Focusing on school-age children is especially important, because children can learn to live healthier lives that will reduce their risk for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and other life-threatening illnesses. On February 4th, 2014, I was the moderator and co-host of National Cancer Prevention Day on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., with Less Cancer, a not for profit organization. This bi-partisan event included all of the stakeholders named above, and served to educate and motivate young and old alike to take action to prevent cancer and other diseases. It was a highly successful event, and one which will be repeated in other cities across the USA.#