



MichiganWomenForward



Muriel Dorothy Ross

(1927 -)

Inducted: 2002 Locale: Ann Arbor Era: Contemporary

Area(s) of Achievement: Education, Medicine/Health Care

Dr. Muriel Ross' professional life has included roles as a medical educator, researcher, and administrator. She is a pioneer in both virtual medical imaging and in telemedicine. She is listed along with Jacqueline Cochran and Sally Ride in the Women's Milestones portion of NASA's website.

Dr. Ross worked as a professor of neural anatomy, specializing in the anatomy of the inner ear, at the University of Michigan Medical Center from 1962 to 1986. In 1977 she was awarded the Elizabeth C. Crosby Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Her interest and research in the vestibular system spurred an interest in three-dimensional virtual modeling. In 1986, Dr. Ross left her teaching position at U-M to pursue her interest in virtual imaging. She was able to accomplish this as the founding director of the Biocomputation Center at NASA Ames Research Center. Here she was instrumental in the creation of reconstruction virtual imaging software for the Virtual Collaborative Clinic. This software was the 1999 runner up in the NASA software competition. While this virtual surgical simulator was developed for use on the International Space Station, it has proven to be an invaluable tool for surgeons who can practice their techniques and surgical procedures on a virtual model before performing them on patients. The Virtual Collaborative Clinic also enables rural physicians to have access to cutting-edge medical facilities.

Dr. Ross is a popular speaker at scientific conferences and gatherings throughout the world. She has spoken at venues as diverse as the Royal Society Meeting on Biomineralization in London and the Barany Society Satellite Symposium on Vestibular Disorders in Sendai, Japan. She has written many abstracts, articles, and books on various research topics. Dr. Ross' work has brought her several honors and awards including the Fogarty International Fellowship for Study at Oxford University, NASA Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement, the Hallpike-Nylen medal from the Barany Society for her research on the vestibular system, and the Jefferies Medical Research Award from the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

Throughout her career, Dr. Ross has remained committed to achieving gender equality in the sciences. From 1977 to 1979, she served as co-chair of the Academic Women's Caucus at the University of Michigan. One of her objectives in that role was to draw attention to the status of faculty women. The Women's Academic Caucus presented Dr. Ross with the Distinguished Service Award in 1987.

Dr. Muriel Ross is further proof that women do excel in the sciences, and she has broken down gender barriers for future generations. Her research has propelled medicine into the 21st century and her legacy will be long-lived.