

## Junctures in Women's Leadership: Health Care and Public Health

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*Junctures in Women's Leadership: Health Care and Public Health* presents case studies highlighting transformational women leaders. This book is one of a series, with the other volumes focusing on business, social movements, arts, and higher education. Mary O'Dowd serves on the advisory board for the Institute for Women's Leadership at Rutgers University and is a former New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner. Ruth Charbonneau served on the leadership team for several commissioners of the New Jersey Department of Health. Their leadership roles and experience position them to be well-equipped to edit this book.

Descriptions of an array of women leaders in public health and health care, ranging over a 150-year period, offer examples of different impactful leadership styles and approaches. Providing readers with a deeper context, the preface gives a time line showing significant historical events during the life span of these women leaders. I appreciate the editors' challenge in deciding who to include and feel that the selection provided a breadth of backgrounds and experiences. Underlying themes, including diversity, community, and collaboration, tie chapters together.

Each chapter features one leader and presents their background leading to a juncture, or decision point, in their journey and the resolution. The opening chapter features Katsi Cook, a midwife who advocated for the health of the Mohawk community of Akwesasne in response to environmental contamination. The background describes Mohawk community ideology and its tradition of strong women leadership. Cook's commitment to honoring the ways of her Indigenous people and her advocacy to integrate them in all aspects of research studies led to her pioneering community-engaged, participatory research. The reader is led from a description of Cook's ancestral roots, to their impact on her engaging Indigenous people in community research, and to a culmination of her mentorship of other Indigenous women leaders. The reader gets a feel for her life's journey and the breadth of her impact.

Marilyn Tavenner led the launch of Healthcare.gov, the website that was key in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The background describes the contention around the ACA and Tavenner's ascent through the health care system. Her juncture revolved around how she responded to the website's failed launch. She owned the failure, not laying blame, and ultimately drove her team to a successful website, achieving the overarching goal of providing access to care for millions of Americans—a goal she never lost sight of. Her leadership style is described as having both feminine and masculine stereotypical qualities, focusing on forming relationships and being friendly and empathic but also being aggressive. While I can appreciate the general description of Tavenner's leadership style, additional details or examples would have helped to highlight how she straddled gender stereotypes so successfully. Her chapter was one of the shortest, and I feel that it could have been further flushed out or included perspectives of the teams she led. Cook and Tavenner are just a couple of the women leaders that the reader will encounter.

The editors chose not to follow a chronologic path in the order of presentation, which makes following the context of the time from case to case challenging. However, due to



the case structure, a reader could choose to read them in chronologic order. Additionally, each case is succinct and focuses on one leader, which makes the book easy to read and gives the reader the ability to read one case at a time, simply picking right back up with the next case.

The background research is thorough and with a variety of sources making the presentation authentic and well-rounded. The authors present not only positive decisions made but also explore those that in retrospect were not correct; however, ultimately, they spoke to the path that individual took in their journey toward the highlighted work. They don't shy away from concepts such as burnout and the importance of reflecting, renewing, and returning.

Three important themes that emerge are the importance of having a good mentor and in turn mentoring others, the diverse strategies that can comprise impactful leadership, and the way many successful leaders consider dynamic opportunities and use interdisciplinary teams to serve their communities. From Katsi Cook and Marilyn Tavenner to Mary Engle Pennington, Virginia Apgar, and others, a wide breadth of leadership lessons can be gleaned no matter your gender or stage in your career. This book would resonate with a variety of roles because it demonstrates the diverse nature of leadership as well as sparks reflection on our own leadership style and ability to make transformational change.