Preface

Elizabeth L. Travis PhD
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

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Preface

This book celebrates the stellar successes of 26 women physicians and scientists who share their stories of productive careers at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Collectively, they represent the very best of our many talented faculty who are providing state-of-the-art patient care, helping teach the next generation of health care professionals and conducting cutting-edge research that is reducing the impact of cancer for people throughout the world.

As a faculty member at M. D. Anderson for 25 years, I have had the pleasure of working with most of the women who chronicle their journeys in *Legends and Legacies*. When I was appointed the first Associate Vice President for Women Faculty Programs in 2006, one of my early goals was to recognize the impressive — and increasing — accomplishments of all our women faculty while enhancing advocacy efforts that will improve opportunities for women at our institution as well as in our numerous professional societies. Another mutual goal for all of us in leadership positions involves inspiring young women to enter the biomedical sciences. Certainly, I am pleased that this book honors some of our women faculty, and in doing so I am excited about how it, hopefully, will motivate high school and college students to consider careers in medicine and science.

The most difficult part of planning this book was selecting the contributors because we have so many women faculty from diverse backgrounds with interesting stories to tell. Our diversity is illustrated through our professional roles, ranging from clinicians who diagnose and treat all forms of cancer, physician-scientists who apply findings from laboratory research to improve therapies, basic scientists who make the discoveries that unlock cancer-related mysteries, faculty who focus on preventing cancer by identifying individuals at high risk and/or offering programs to change behaviors, and veterinarians who coordinate the care and use of animals critical to new knowledge about cancer. The individual stories provide uniquely personal descriptions of the triumphs, failures and disappointments that we have faced while developing our careers. The common thread that connects us is our passion for helping others while balancing our professional lives with enjoying our families.

Although about 50 percent of medical school graduates and Ph.D. degrees in the life sciences are now awarded to women, the proportion of women in related careers at academic institutions across the country is woefully under-represented, particularly in the full professor and executive ranks. M. D. Anderson has a long-standing interest in recruiting and promoting women, yet only about one-third of our faculty are women.
The over-arching objective for the Office of Women Faculty Programs is for M. D. Anderson to become the number one destination for women physicians and scientists in cancer treatment and research. I am optimistic that this book will help us realize that vision.

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Elizabeth L. Travis, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Women Faculty Programs
Professor of Experimental Radiation Oncology
Mattie Allen Fair Professor in Cancer Research
The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center