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CEDARS-SINAI HEART INSTITUTE CARDIOLOGIST NAMED TOP U.S. WOMAN CARDIOLOGIST IN INAUGURAL AWARD

LOS ANGELES (Jan. 9, 2009) – C. Noel Bairey Merz, M.D., a nationally recognized authority on preventive cardiology and women's heart health, has taken the top honor in the first Dr. Carolyn McCue Woman Cardiologist of the Year Award program, presented by the [Virginia Commonwealth University Pauley Heart Center](#).

Bairey Merz is director of the Women's Heart Center as well as the Preventive and Rehabilitative Cardiac Center at the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute. In addition, she holds the Women's Guild Endowed Chair in Women's Health and is a professor of medicine at Cedars-Sinai.

The McCue Award honors the memory of Dr. Carolyn McCue, M.D., one of the few woman cardiologists of her time and pioneer in the field of pediatric cardiology who practiced at the Medical College of Virginia, now the [VCU Medical Center](#), for 42 years. She created and chaired the school's Pediatric Cardiology Division for 20 years, during which she was instrumental in establishing pediatric cardiology clinics in medically underserved communities throughout Virginia.

The McCue Award, which includes national publicity and a \$10,000 prize, is made possible by a grant from the McCue family, "to encourage and inspire other young women to pursue careers in cardiology." It will be presented at a ceremony in Richmond on Feb. 26, 2009. The family plans to make it an annual award.

"Dr. Bairey Merz has devoted her professional life to improving women's health, today and in the future," said Eduardo Marbán, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute. "Through her research, we now have a much better understanding of the unique nature of heart disease in women, and this body of knowledge continues to grow. A prolific research scientist, an excellent physician, and a remarkable human being, Dr. Bairey Merz is a tremendous asset to the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute and the ideal choice to be the first recipient of this award."

P.K. Shah, M.D., a long-time colleague and former mentor of Dr. Bairey Merz, agrees. "Dr. Bairey Merz has made significant contributions to our understanding of how women's hearts and arteries differ from men's, and this award is a fitting tribute to, and recognition of, her body of work in this field," said Shah, director of the Division of Cardiology at the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute.

Since 1997, Bairey Merz has been chair of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute -sponsored multicenter study, Women's Ischemic Syndrome Evaluation (WISE), which is investigating the potential for more effective diagnostic, evaluation and treatment methods for ischemic heart disease in women, and is considered the pre-eminent examination of women and ischemic heart disease.

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Throughout her career, Bairey Merz has served the medical community in countless ways. She is on the Board of Trustees of the American College of Cardiology, the steering committees for the National Cholesterol Education Program and writing group, the National Space Biomedical Research Institute, and is chair of the American Heart Association's Women in Cardiology committee. She has authored more than 170 peer-reviewed research papers and has been an invited presenter at more than 300 scientific meetings.

"Dr. Bairey Merz truly exemplifies the qualities of Dr. Carolyn McCue," said [George W. Vetrovec, M.D.](#), chair of the VCU School of Medicine's Division of Cardiology. "She is a trailblazer, a prolific researcher, an inspiring educator and mentor, and a very fine cardiologist. Her groundbreaking work in both preventive cardiology and women's heart health has advanced our knowledge base and given serious momentum to these critically important areas of our field. I can't think of a better role model for young women considering cardiology careers."

The McCue Award Program attracted nominations from top medical centers throughout the country.

"We are extremely pleased with the quantity and quality of nominations we received, especially given that this was the program's inaugural year," said Vetrovec. "Many of the most accomplished women cardiologists in the country were nominated, making it a highly competitive award and a tough decision for our Award Panel."

About the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute and the Women's Heart Center

The [Cedars-Sinai Women's Heart Center](#) provides risk assessment, diagnosis and heart disease care that is specifically tailored to women. It is part of the [Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute](#) and the Division of Cardiology, which are internationally recognized for outstanding heart care built on decades of innovation and leading-edge research. Much of the Women's Heart Center research and education is supported by endowments from Barbra Streisand and the Broad Foundation. From cardiac rehabilitative and preventive care and heart transplantation to the training of the heart specialists of tomorrow and leading-edge research that is deepening medical knowledge and practice, the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute is known around the world for excellence and innovations.

About the VCU Pauley Heart Center

The VCU Pauley Heart Center is recognized nationally for its heart failure and heart transplantation programs, and was among the first in the United States to implant the CardioWest temporary Total Artificial Heart, or TAH-t – the only total artificial heart approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The heart center is comprised of the Divisions of Cardiology, Cardiothoracic Surgery and Pediatric Cardiology. There is close collaboration between the divisions to provide advanced, patient-centered care to patients of all ages, with every type of heart disease, with the best possible outcomes. Pauley Heart Center's superior performance resulted in VCU Medical Center being recognized as one of the top 100 U.S. hospitals for cardiovascular care, according to a Thomson Reuters study.

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