

A Decade of Innovation

Noreen Clark's colleagues reflect on her leadership and legacy.

Claude Lenfant

Director (1982–2003), National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



For the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Dr. Noreen Clark exemplifies, in more than one way, how one devoted scientist

can make a significant contribution to the health of the people in the United States and abroad. Indeed, my personal experience with Dr. Clark began in the mid-1980s when the institute launched a program for the prevention, treatment, and control of asthma.

As I recall, at that time Dr. Clark was at Columbia University, where she became a force behind the asthma self-management program. Since then, I have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Clark on many occasions.

Her unique energy and talent were soon to be recognized in the public health community, and it was no surprise to see her appointed chair of the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Her appointment as dean in 1995 created new opportunities that she accepted with great stamina, for the very good fortune of all those suffering from chronic disease, especially asthma.

I think that the unique characteristic of Dr. Clark can be summarized as follows. She understands basic research, she knows that it must be transported to the clinical arena, but she also knows that the real importance is the impact on the individual patient. Her work relative to asthma management in schools, in communities, and in partnership with the patients has set an example for colleagues and students. I have no doubt that the School of Public Health will feel her departure as dean, but if her plans are to continue what she does so well, patients in the U.S. and abroad will continue to benefit. ■

most complex public health questions of our times. Another example has been her global health initiative, which will better equip students and faculty to operate in the new era of health interdependency.

Every generation has the duty of enriching the legacy it has received. Dean Noreen Clark has fulfilled that duty with excellence. Her own legacy is a stronger School of Public Health that is poised to take our field to new heights. ■

Charles Eisendrath

Director, Knight-Wallace Fellows Program at the University of Michigan



To a journalist like me, and the other 18 reporters and editors that the Knight-Wallace Fellows Program brings to campus each year,

Noreen Clark is just about the Platonic form of helpful expert. That's because she understands and handles beautifully the language of common discourse, effortlessly translating the jargon of academic research for those of us whose job it is to inform the public about key issues in disease prevention.

This shows in her school as well as her person. Public health, of course, has been among the University of Michigan's top units for decades, and one that has taken seriously the mission of broad dis-

Julio Frenk

MPH '81, PhD '83, Secretary of Health of Mexico



As a proud alumnus who has maintained close contact with our alma mater, I have had the privilege of witnessing and benefiting from the visionary leadership of Noreen Clark at the helm of the University of Michigan School of Public Health.

Hers has been a decade of growth and innovation. I have been particularly impressed by her ability to broaden the boundaries of public health. One prime example has been her success in building interdisciplinary bridges to tackle the

1995

Noreen M. Clark becomes dean of the School of Public Health.

Detroit Community–Academic Research Center is established.

1996

School of Public Health reorganized into five departments: biostatistics, environmental health sciences, epidemiology, health behavior and health education, health management and policy.

Interdepartmental Concentration in Public Health Genetics established, highlighting University of Michigan's eminence in this area.

1997

Core public health curriculum revised and introduced.

semination of knowledge. But none have done more than Noreen to make sure the school reached out to unusual projects beyond the discipline as traditionally construed. I have counted myself fortunate to have been part of several, and am honored to have been asked to contribute this brief testimonial/fan letter. ■

Mary Sue Coleman
President, University of Michigan



Central to Noreen Clark's achievements has been her leadership in establishing specific research and education centers that are tackling some of the most vexing problems facing our society—problems that affect all of us. Consider the following: the school hosts an Interdepartmental Concentration in Public Health Genetics; a Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health; a Center for Social Epidemiology and Population Health; an Interdepartmental Concentration in Reproductive and Women's Health; and a Prevention Research Center. The great contributions and accomplishments of our School of Public Health are profound and far-reaching. One particular initiative is of great professional interest to me, given my involvement at the national level on the issue of uninsurance, which directly affects millions of citizens, and indirectly affects us all. In 2001, the school launched the Economic Research Initiative on the Uninsured with a large grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation—this center has made splendid contributions to our understanding of this acute societal problem.

These are but a few examples of the foresight and skill that Dean Clark brought to the University of Michigan. During her tenure, our school emerged as one of the most distinguished public health entities in the United States. Her ability to build programs that attract external funding has been extraordinary.

“Dean Clark led the way in creating substantive responses to the demographic and environmental dynamics of society.”

— William C. Richardson

Until recently, faculty, staff and students in public health labored in facilities that were totally unsuited to the high quality and demanding work of its programs. Once again, Dean Clark provided unparalleled leadership in securing commitments which will make possible the reconstruction and expansion of the physical facilities of the school. So, in addition to her intellectual leadership, she will leave the legacy of new spaces for teaching, for research, and for community partnerships. ■

Gail Warden

MHA '62, President Emeritus, Henry Ford Health System; Member, Dean's Advisory Committee, University of Michigan School of Public Health



When I think of Noreen Clark's legacy as the dean, I'm reminded of three major accomplishments: recruitment of several excellent new faculty members, the establishment of several centers of excellence in areas ranging from social epidemiology and population health to genomics and health management and policy, and the most important one, being the impetus and chief fundraiser for a new School of Public Health building. As she has accomplished all this, she has also been instrumental in promoting public health as a discipline on the Michigan campus, on the national level, and in the community. ■

Harrison Spencer

President and CEO, Association of Schools of Public Health



Dean Noreen Clark has provided a decade of outstanding leadership to the University of Michigan and to the nation. Her peers, the deans of accredited schools of public health, quickly recognized her intellect and management skills. She served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), as chair of the Education Committee leading the

1998

Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health is established.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation awards \$3.5 million to establish Community Health Scholars Program national office at School of Public Health.

Center for Social Epidemiology and Population Health is established.

Interdepartmental Concentration in Reproductive and Women's Health is initiated and enrolls its first cohort of students.

Vice President Al Gore names newly established Michigan Center for the Environment and Children's Health one of 12 nationwide Centers of Excellence in Children's Environmental Health Research.

School holds first all-day schoolwide symposium on key public health issue, children's health; topics of subsequent symposia are tobacco control, genomics, genetically modified organisms, obesity, and global health.

chair of the Education Committee leading the process to develop competencies for the MPH degree, and as the chair of the ASPH NIH Task Force charged with increasing funding for population-based prevention research at NIH. To each position she brought vision, dedication, and a special ability to effectively address complex issues. As a behavioral scientist, she brought a critical perspective to national discussions as schools of public health transitioned toward an academic ecological model.

I, personally, have benefited enormously from Noreen Clark's wise counsel, her insight, and her determination. She is an outstanding public health leader who has made significant contributions wherever she has been involved. I, the staff of ASPH, and the deans of the accredited schools wish her very well in the next phase of her professional and personal lives. We thank her for all she has accomplished. ■

Melissa Valerio

MPH '01, Doctoral Student and Research Associate, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, University of Michigan School of Public Health



Dean Clark's impact on public health is best observed at international conferences where she is an invited and/or honored speaker for her research in chronic disease management. During an annual conference in respiratory disease, where she was honored with a

Lifetime Achievement Award, a colleague approached me and asked what it was like to work with one of the leaders in asthma research. At that moment, I was once again reminded of Dean Clark's influence outside of our school.

Her research and support of public health, specifically chronic disease management, will have an impact on the vision of the University of Michigan School of Public Health for years to come. As we all know, the human and economic costs of chronic disease are enormous. Chronic diseases can significantly impede individuals and families and cost billions of dollars annually in both direct health service costs and indirectly because of missed work or school. As seen in Dr. Clark's research, effective chronic disease strategies are those that consider "the functions that comprise chronic disease management, including all stakeholder groups: patient and family, health care professionals, health service organizations and systems, and communities and policy" (Clark, 2003). Only when considering these "spheres of influence" will we as public health professionals be able to address current health disparities and prevent the institution of others.

Dr. Clark's recognition of the interconnectedness of each of the SPH departments, such as that needed in chronic disease management, and her dedication to ensuring students' training have led to curricula revisions and the establishment of interdepartmental concentrations. As a member of her research team I have gained not only a wonderful learning experience but also a mentor. ■

"Noreen has set the benchmark for how a dean can reach out across this university."

— Timothy R.B. Johnson

Timothy R.B. Johnson

Bates Professor of Diseases of Women and Children, and Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Michigan Medical School; Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, Department of Women's Studies, University of Michigan; Research Scientist, Institute for Research on Women and Gender, University of Michigan



During her tenure as dean, Noreen Clark has continued to pursue her own research on asthma and, in fact, has developed a

special interest in women's asthma, for which she received federal funding. Her interdisciplinary team has worked with the University of Michigan Women's Health Program collegially to advance our understanding about special problems in women with asthma, including those associated with pregnancy, menopause, hormone therapy, and other stresses which women have in their common lives. This ability to lead an interdisciplinary research team, provide cross-disciplinary leadership to the research effort, and make contributions

1999

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention designates SPH one of 23 national Centers for Prevention Research.

Tobacco Research Network and Centers for Molecular and Clinical Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases, Statistical Genetics, and Social Epidemiology and Population Health are established.

2000

United States Agency for International Development awards \$48 million to Population Fellows Program.

Michigan Public Health Training Center is established.

School of Public Health is among top five research units at University of Michigan; school's percentage increase in research funding leads university.

to knowledge and practice that will change clinical practice is probably unique among sitting deans, and something that has been very much appreciated by her collaborators and colleagues.

The comprehensive Women's Health Program at the University of Michigan has benefited greatly from having Noreen and her group involved at many levels, given their interest in women's health issues. Noreen has set the benchmark for how a dean, through her research collaboration and her "leadership by example," can reach out across this university, collaborate with a broad series of other investigators, and make a difference in public health and especially in my interest, the public health of women. ■

William L. Roper

MD, MPH, Dean, School of Medicine, Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs and CEO, UNC Health Care System; Former Dean, School of Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



The University of Michigan School of Public Health has flourished under Noreen Clark's leadership.

During her ten years as dean, the school has grown in influence both nationally and internationally, and she has seen the school tackle the great challenges that face public health today—women's health, genetics, health disparities, bioterrorism preparedness, infectious disease prevention—the list goes on. She has led Michigan to be one of the great schools of public health

in the nation today, and I say this not as an alumnus, nor as a faculty colleague, but as dean of a competing school. I was dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health during six of Dean Clark's ten years. I know the attraction that Michigan has for some of the best and brightest students and faculty—at least I've discovered it, as some have been recruited away from Carolina. I give her warm congratulations on her ten years at the helm of this outstanding school. ■

Mark Becker

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, University of South Carolina



It has been a unique privilege and pleasure to work with Noreen Clark during the past nine years. She served as an outstanding mentor to me while I was a faculty member and associate dean at the University of Michigan and has become a valued peer and colleague since I joined the ranks of public health deans in 2001.

In advancing the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, Noreen's tenure has been marked by a staunch commitment to advancing Michigan's research programs. Numerous new research centers have been established under her leadership and, more importantly, innovation in research has become a hallmark at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Innovation has not been confined to the research arena. Indeed, Noreen has made it the norm in the educational arena as well.

She leaves her mark as a new building for the School of Public Health is underway. Moving that project forward in a challenging budget environment is nothing short of remarkable.

While her accomplishments have been significant, Noreen's professionalism and personal way of dealing with issues is what has been most impressive. She has an extraordinary talent for making people comfortable and for dealing with difficult situations in a fair and dignified manner. ■

Risa Lavizzo-Mourey

MD, MBA, President and CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



Noreen Clark has made enormous contributions to the University of Michigan School of Public Health and the field of public health

nationally as well as internationally. In particular Dean Clark has been a leader in the effort to understand and combat the complex factors underlying the alarming rise in childhood asthma. Her leadership as a scientist and advocate are unparalleled. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has been proud to work with Dean Clark, and we salute her. ■

“As a behavioral scientist, she brought a critical perspective.”

— Harrison Spencer

2001



Allies Against Asthma, a partnership with The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, launches \$17 million nationwide campaign to reduce pediatric asthma.

Michigan Center for Genomics and Public Health is established.

School of Public Health increases research expenditures by 23% from previous year.

Economic Research Initiative on the Uninsured established with \$9 million grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

E. Yvonne Lewis

Executive Director, Faith Access to Community Economic Development, Flint, Michigan



A note of gratitude to Dr. Noreen Clark:

Five years ago, you provided an opportunity for me to attend a Prevention

Research Center director's meeting. Your support has had a significant impact on the involvement of community representation in the National Program of the Prevention Research Centers. I just want to simply say Thank You. Words are not adequate enough to express the extent to which your influence has not only impacted me, but the tremendous future that is in store for those who have had the opportunity to be blessed by your contributions to the field.

You took the time to listen,

You pondered and took careful action.

You made a personal commitment, and

You shared opportunity.

You opened a new door that changed the lives of many,

You will always be remembered each time the record is read.

You are encouraged to take a moment and reflect upon the past, and

You will find that the memories left were stepping stones to the future.

You can now enjoy your future filled with many benefits, for

You leave behind a legacy that will long be remembered.

Thank you for your investment and commitment to the future of community-based participatory research. May God bless you as you enter the next door of opportunity. ■

“She understands basic research, she knows it must be transported to the clinical arena, but she also knows that the real importance is the impact on the individual patient. Her work relative to asthma management in schools, in communities, and in partnership with the patients has set an example for colleagues and students.”

— Claude Lenfant

Robert Lane

MHSA '76, Chairman of the Board, Specialty Health Services Management, LLC; Member, Dean's Advisory Committee, University of Michigan School of Public Health



Dr. Noreen Clark leaves a remarkable legacy as dean of the School of Public Health. Regrettably, the new dean will face the

unfortunate circumstances of following a dean who was both well-loved, highly respected, and who accomplished much. This is comparable to being a football coach who had the misfortune of following Bo Schembechler.

Dr. Clark is to be particularly commended for her successes in the following areas:

- Breaking ground to address the significant building deficiencies that one of the nation's leading public health schools faced;
- Rebuilding the School of Public Health's standing and support with its various constituencies, some of whom had been long neglected; particularly, Noreen should be commended for reigniting the pilot light for alumni support;
- Creating academic centers of excellence and following through with the funding to recruit and retain nationally and internationally regarded faculty;
- Focusing on faculty collaboration and support in accomplishing results rather than supporting academic fiefdoms.

My wife, Vikki, and I have been pleased to know Noreen (and George) for several years now. I regret that she

2002

University of Michigan Bioterrorism Preparedness Initiative is established.

Asthma Research Collaborative is founded.

Newly reinstated Preventive Medicine Residency Program graduates first group of public health physicians.

Interdepartmental Concentration in Global Health and Global Health Program are launched.

Academic Center for Public Health Preparedness is established.

2003

FluMist™, a new nasal-spray influenza vaccine developed at the School of Public Health by Professor John H. Maassab, is approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration.

Griffith Leadership Center is established.

no longer will be dean and that her leadership role will end. Hopefully, Noreen will now have the opportunity to further her research efforts, which she kindly and unselfishly put on the back shelf for the greater good of the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Additionally, we hope that she is able to more thoroughly enjoy her newfound freedom by spending more time with friends and in the pursuit of her own happiness. ■

“Noreen Clark is just about the Platonic form of helpful expert.”

— Charles Eisendrath

Paul N. Courant

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Michigan



Working with Noreen Clark has been a pleasure academically, administratively, and personally. I will miss her leadership but am consoled that she will still be a colleague, leader, and friend.

In her work as dean, Noreen has accomplished much, but what will be most apparent for the longest time is the new building now under construction. Her combination of intelligence, extraordinary commitment, great powers

of persuasion, force of personality, political skill, and knowledge about how to move money in support of research have made this building a reality and thus secured the international reputation of the school for decades to come. Noreen may have found the current physical surroundings at the School of Public Health to be a strong incentive for her untiring work on the building, but she has not let them inhibit her own productivity or that of colleagues. Under her leadership these last nine years, the school has improved its standing relative to its peers and today is one of the top five schools in the nation. Noreen’s strong support of the faculty, her impeccable taste in research, and her ability to seize collaborative opportunities have played to the strengths of the university and made her an ideal dean. ■

William C. Richardson

President and CEO, W.K. Kellogg Foundation



Dean Noreen Clark has had a remarkable tenure as dean of the University of Michigan School of Public Health. It is with great

pleasure that I share my reflections of her deanship as she closes this chapter of her life journey.

For over a decade the Kellogg Foundation has invested in academic institutions that demonstrate their ability to be engaged with communities in ways that produce the most sustainable public health outcomes. Early in her

tenure she encouraged and supported the development of a movement for “community-based public health” that modeled effective community engagement in public health practice and research. She then institutionalized this important work and set an example for her peers by establishing an Office of Community-Based Public Health.

Dean Clark led the way in creating substantive responses to the demographic and environmental dynamics of society by creating interdepartmental concentrations in global health, public health genetics, and women’s health as well as the Center for Social Epidemiology and Population Health and the Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health, to better prepare students for the multidisciplinary nature of complex public health issues.

Finally, the design of the new building for the school, and the expected programming for Community Crossroads, is a phenomenal capstone for her tenure and show her commitment to making public health education accessible and transparent to the community and to creating an institution that is truly engaged with its community. ■

“Her ability to build programs that attract external funding has been extraordinary.”

— Mary Sue Coleman

2004



National Cancer Institute awards \$10 million to create University of Michigan Center for Health Communications Research.

Construction begins on new \$80 million School of Public Health expansion, with completion scheduled for 2006.

Risk Science and Communication Center is established.

School of Public Health launches initiative to recruit more than a dozen new junior faculty members whose work moves beyond traditional boundaries.

School of Public Health receives \$5 million grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation and \$5 million anonymous gift to further efforts to make school a crossroads of disciplines, communities, and ideas.