Recently, the fields of cardiovascular epidemiology and women’s health were dealt a heavy blow with the premature and unexpected death of Dr Trudy Bush (1949 to 2001). At the time of her demise (age 52), she was one of the foremost authorities on the cardiovascular effects of hormone replacement therapy in postmenopausal women. Sadly, the shutters on her life were closed just as some of the most illuminating new knowledge about estrogen and heart disease was emerging on the horizon—new knowledge that came to light in part as a result of her vision and guidance. Dr Bush’s own research and her advice to the many other investigators who sought her counsel was characterized by originality. She was always offering novel perspectives on data, generating new hypotheses, and challenging us all to move forward toward the goal of improved health and longevity for older women.

Dr Bush’s training in sociology and epidemiology at Penn State University and The Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health set the stage for a remarkably productive career. In 1983 and again in 1987, she authored 2 of the most frequently cited papers concerning the relationship between postmenopausal hormone replacement therapy and cardiovascular and all-cause mortality.1,2 She went on to serve as a principal investigator of both of the first large clinical trials designed to understand more clearly the effects of hormone replacement therapy on the risk for heart disease, the Postmenopausal Estrogen/Progestin Intervention trial (PEPI)3 and the Heart and Estrogen/Progestin Replacement Study (HERS).4 She also made important contributions to the understanding of other chronic diseases that are common in postmenopausal women, including osteoporosis and breast and endometrial carcinoma. In addition to her research, she supported the scientific community by serving as an advisor or committee member for numerous national and international organizations, including the American Heart Association, the National Institutes of Health, The US General Accounting Office, and the Institute of Medicine.

Those of us who were fortunate enough to know Dr Bush as a friend and colleague will always remember her creativity, her willingness to challenge conventional paradigms, and her gentle sense of humor. These attributes also made her an ideal mentor to the many students she taught and advised during her roughly 20-year career at Shippensburg State College in Pennsylvania, the University of Oklahoma, Columbia University, The Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Maryland.

Like many great people, her considerable successes were preceded by tremendous adversity early in life. Ultimately, however, she found joy and solace in the long-term support of her partner Dr Sue Miller and their adored daughter, Emily.

It is a sad twist of irony that Dr Bush may have succumbed to the very disease (cardiovascular disease) that was the principal focus of her career. Fittingly, her family has asked that in remembrance of Dr Bush, donations can be made to the American Heart Association.

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Trudy L. Bush
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