



What's Past is Prologue: The Personal Stories of Women in Science at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

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One doctor's career began more than half a century ago, during World War II; another's began only recently, near the start of the new millennium. One scientist was a Kentucky farm girl who had never even dreamed of going to college; another survived the cultural re-education prescribed for intellectuals under China's late Chairman Mao. Despite their various backgrounds, these women in science at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine have much in common with each other, and, they hope, with women who will come after.

In *What's Past is Prologue*, twenty-seven female scientists share their personal stories of life in academic research. They reveal their family backgrounds and how they became interested in science, research, and medicine. Each one relates her educational growth, professional successes and struggles, and life experiences. Time after time, these doctors stress the joy of discovery and the keys to success: caring mentors, strong time management skills, and supportive friends and family.

With specialties that range from neonatology to microbiology, pediatrics to cancer research, and ophthalmology to law, these physicians and PhDs work as deans, investigators, chairs, directors, professors, and more at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. Many are also wives and mothers, and they offer valuable advice on how to balance family and career, lab and clinic, and also recreation and work.

Personal, candid, and passionate, the essays in *What's Past is Prologue* vividly capture the reality and promise of life as a scientist. In mentor-like fashion, these busy leaders encourage other women to consider careers of investigation, illustrate how they can succeed both personally and professionally, and emphasize that more women are needed in academic medicine. In sharing their stories, the writers hope to help the women who come after them, blazing new trails and celebrating exciting discoveries that will change the face of medicine and research.

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