

# Ann Lurie

## *Recipient of the 2009 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Award for Humanitarian Contributions to the Health of Humankind*

**F**or her empathy and generosity, Ann Lurie is being honored with the 2009 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Award for Humanitarian Contributions to the Health of Humankind by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases.

“Ann’s life is an exceptional story of one person’s commitment to helping people through worldwide professional, civic and philanthropic endeavors,” says Dr. Henry S. Bienen, President of Northwestern University.

“Ann is a true archetype for the future of humanitarian leaders,” says former U.S. Congressman John Edward Porter. “She is on the ground, in the boardrooms, and at the drawing table, working tenaciously for our collective welfare. Her leadership, commitment and actions continue to be catalysts for effective change and progress at all levels.”

Over the past 20 years, she has donated more than \$250 million to improving the health and well being of people in Chicago and around the world.

Mrs. Lurie graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in nursing and immediately went into public health in and around Tallahassee. “I drove my little green Volkswagen Beetle around Leon County,” she says. “I made home visits and weighed babies on a fish scale.”

She worked in pediatrics at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, then eventually moved to Chicago to become a nurse at Children’s Memorial Hospital in the early 1970s. It was there she met her husband, Robert H. Lurie. Lurie was a successful real estate investor and partners with Sam Zell.

In 1985, Robert and Ann Lurie had their sixth child.

They decided to turn their attention to others and establish a philanthropic foundation. But on New Year’s Eve, 1987, Robert was diagnosed with advanced colon cancer. He died less than three years later.

Ann continued to be involved in the family investment business. She established her own firm, Lurie Investments, in the 1990s. “We started diversifying,” she says, “and we were early participants in what has come to be known as social investing—putting venture capital into early stage ideas and products that could have a positive impact on people’s lives, particularly biomedical products and molecular diagnostics.”

Her gifts include more than \$60 million to endow the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center at Northwestern University—where Robert was treated when he was sick—as well as the state-of-the-art Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center—a 12-story edifice with lecture auditoriums and laboratories that accommodate more than



1,000 researchers, technicians, postdoctoral students and lab assistants.

She also established two professorships at Northwestern and one at Children's Memorial Hospital, focusing on cancer research. And she funded a laboratory in the medical research center to study cancer genetics.

At the University of Michigan, her husband's alma mater, she has supported the schools of engineering and business, and she established the Marion Elizabeth Blue Professorship in Children and Families at the university's School of Social Work in memory of her mother. She added a matching challenge grant as an incentive for others to create fellowships.

Mrs. Lurie has made her gifts more public—"often in an effort to encourage others to give," Dr. Bienen says.

Through the years, she has not forgotten Children's Memorial Hospital, "where I worked," she says. Recently she pledged \$100 million to help build the new Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. The donation is the largest charitable investment ever received in the hospital's more than 125 year history. It is scheduled to open in 2012.

"This gift will transform Children's Memorial Hospital and the care that we are able to provide to children and families," Patrick M. Magoon, the hospital's president and CEO said. "This landmark investment in children's health will enable our community to better provide every child with the opportunity to reach his or her full potential."

One of her major endeavors now is her work in Africa. As the founder and president of Africa Infectious Disease (AID) Village Clinics, Mrs. Lurie oversees operations that

provide medical care and education to the Maasai people of rural southeastern Kenya. She started the clinic in 2002 in one Airstream trailer towed by a used Land Cruiser. She had four employees. "There were no roads, no running water," she says. "No sanitary facilities."

She called on her early nursing experience in rural Florida. "That experience turned out to be very relevant to starting this clinic in Kenya," she says. "In the mid-70s rural Leon County was a lot like rural Africa with limited public health care."

Since 2002, she has made about 50 trips to Kenya. "It's a real hands-on project," she says. In the past six years, AID Village Clinics has continued its mobile outreach with the clinic on wheels while creating a fixed-base compound of 22 buildings, including laboratory facilities, a dispensing pharmacy, inpatient facilities for seriously ill patients, a visiting staff dormitory, staff housing, a

cafeteria, a voluntary counseling and testing center for HIV and four examination rooms. The medical compound provides clinical and education services to combat malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other diseases in an area 80 miles in diameter with a population of 90,000 people.

According to the group's Web site, [www.aidvillageclinics.org](http://www.aidvillageclinics.org), more than 10,000 free insecticide-treated mosquito nets have been distributed in the area in the past three years. And with a grant from Pfizer International Foundation and assistance from Riders for Health, the organization sponsors 16 outreach workers—including a tuberculosis clinical officer—who are trained to ride and maintain a fleet of motorcycles.

"We're in the salvage business," Ann says. "We save peo-



ple who wouldn't have a chance otherwise."

Working with One Love Africa, Ann provided funding for 30 rural schools—with electricity generators and fresh-water well—in northern Ethiopia. "These schools give children across Ethiopia an opportunity to participate in the global society of the 21st century by providing education in rural communities where none existed before," Dr. Bienen says.

Ann also provides money to a pediatric care program for HIV/AIDS patients in Rwanda, WE-ACTx. The initiative improves access to primary health care and treatment for women and children in resource-limited environments at the grassroots level. Also in the battle against HIV/AIDS, Ann supports a program on the Burma/Chinese border, as well as the Riders for Health, a group that creates and sustains health care delivery systems in Africa.

When she is home in Chicago, she goes to her Lurie Investments office "on a reasonable basis, to make sure everything's doing okay." She serves on a raft of committees, including the Northwestern University Board of Trustees.

She has also been generous in the community at large. She endowed the Lurie Garden and contributed cornerstone funding for the Joan and Irving J. Harris Dance Theater, both in Millennium Park. Her largesse allowed the launch of the Greater Chicago Food Depository Campaign. She provided permanent funding for a holiday party for needy children and low-income seniors at St. Vincent DePaul Center. She financially backed the lead poisoning prevention and triage nursing programs at the Infant Welfare Society.

As co-founder of Gilda's Club, she helped establish a

Chicago-based organization where families and friends of those diagnosed with cancer can get together for social, emotional and educational support.

She has been named "Chicago's Most Powerful Woman in Philanthropy" by the *Chicago Sun-Times*; one of "Chicago's 100 Most Influential Women" by *Crain's Chicago Business*; one of "America's Top Donors" by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* and one of the country's "Leading Philanthropists" by *Business Week* magazine.

"From her early career as a public health nurse to her current role as one of the nation's foremost philanthropists and hands-on advocates for medical care and research, Ann is a shining example of an all embracing, multi-dimensional humanitarian," Dr. Bienen says.

She enjoys being with her family. "Some of my kids live in Chicago," she says. And she delights in her first



grandchild.

Ann also loves animals and funded the Lurie Family Spay Neuter Clinic, administered by PAWS Chicago, to help people on low incomes reduce the number of unwanted pets. She has contributed to the John G. Shedd Aquarium and the Chicago Children's Museum.

"From her work in Africa to making advanced medical facilities a reality here at home," says Rep. John Edward Porter, now a partner in Hogan & Hartson and Chair of Research! America, "Ann Lurie continues to leverage technological, intellectual and financial capital to advance research and care the world over. Her understanding is informed by direct experience with individuals, both those in need and those who lead."