

2008 Distinguished Alumnus Award Winner

Lois Bready, MD

School of Medicine Class of 1977

Growing up in Orange, Texas, a small town nestled in the southeast corner of the state, Lois Bready, MD, was exposed early on in life to a scientific perspective of the world. Her mother, a physicist, taught physical science and physics in the local high school, and her father was a chemical engineer who worked for DuPont.



When Bready arrived at The University of Texas at Austin to study biology, a passion she developed in high school, she had not yet set her sights on medicine. “By the time I declared a major in microbiology at the end of my first year, I had begun to see a number of links between that discipline and medicine,” Bready recalled. “That’s when I began to think about becoming a physician.”

When it came time to choose a medical school, Bready selected San Antonio’s School of Medicine because she liked its “friendly and collegial environment.” During her third-year rotations, she enjoyed each rotation in turn, and became particularly interested in anesthesiology. “I liked the residents I was working with and was drawn to the overarching patient care aspect that is so vital to anesthesiology,” she said. “In fact, one of the most important lessons I learned in medical school is that you always need to focus on patient care.”

Bready was fortunate to study under some of the School’s most renowned professors. “Paul Cutler had a wonderful narrative approach that brought internal medicine to life,” she recalled. “Carlos Pestana’s lyrical and dramatic style when he lectured on surgery was very engaging. I also remember fondly George Bannayan, who was a wonderful Professor of Pathology.”

After earning her medical degree in 1977, Bready headed to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for an internship and then residency in anesthesiology. “I’ll never forget going up to Chapel Hill in the fall of my fourth year of medical school to interview for match,” Bready recalled. “I arrived at night in complete darkness. When I awoke the next morning to begin the day of interviewing, I was greeted by a beautiful campus in the midst of the foliage season!” She was named Chief Resident in the Anesthesiology program in 1979-80, an honor that bolstered her desire to teach medicine.

But as much as she enjoyed her experience in Chapel Hill’s idyllic college-town setting, Bready had plans to return to San Antonio.

She began her teaching career as Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology at the School of Medicine in 1980, earning tenure in 1985-86 before advancing to Associate Professor in 1986. Not long after she began teaching, she became involved in several research projects, which reinforced her interest in understanding how programs and processes work and in making them work more efficiently. This interest, along with her inherent organizational talents, led her to assume administrative duties even as she continued to teach. In the ensuing years, she became further involved with education in anesthesiology, in national organizations, and in a number of publications, including two textbooks. In 1987, at the invitation of her then-Chair R. Brian Smith, MD, she became Residency Program Director, with responsibility for coordination of resident selection, education, evaluation and scheduling. By 1992, she had risen to the level of Professor with tenure.

Developed and implemented by Bready, the University Preoperative Medicine Clinic (UPOMC) is a prime example of how she has combined her considerable talents and passion for patient care to advance the School’s mission. Through the UPOMC, patients scheduled for surgery are interviewed and counseled prior to surgery, ensuring that they are both mentally and physically ready.

Over the past several years, Bready has developed dual career paths in both Anesthesiology and Graduate Medical Education (GME). She was appointed Vice Chair of the Department of Anesthesiology and was appointed to the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Anesthesiology Residency Review Committee (RRC), the entity responsible for accreditation standards and program reviews for the specialty. In 2007, she was elected

Chair of the RRC and continues to serve in that role.

In 1999, Bready became Director of GME for the School of Medicine, with responsibility for the institutional organization, oversight and accreditation of the more than 50 residency and fellowship programs sponsored by the School. Since that time, she has advanced to the position of Associate Dean for GME and Designated Institutional Official for The Health Science Center.

When Bready took the helm of the GME program, the School was on a three-year accreditation cycle, having received 10 citations following its previous accreditation visit. Since that time, the ACGME has confirmed her effectiveness as a leader. Following the ACGME visit in 2003, the School of Medicine's accreditation cycle was extended to five years, the maximum length awarded. ACGME recently placed its stamp of approval on the School's GME program again by renewing its five-year cycle following the 2008 visit.

In 2009, ACGME honored Bready with its Parker J. Palmer Courage to Lead Award. Given to designated institutional officials who are responsible for all ACGME-accredited residency programs at an institution, the award recognizes recipients' success in creating an optimum learning environment for residents; encouraging the ethical, professional and personal development of residents; and ensuring safe and appropriate patient care. In the nomination letter, Anesthesiology Chair Jeffrey Andrews, MD, wrote, "She is hailed as a visionary leader, a hands-on administrator, and an innovative problem-solver by her colleagues... At the heart of Bready's leadership is her complete devotion to the well-being of the patients and the residents under her care."

Bready credits her professional success to several lessons she's learned along the way: "Interesting opportunities arise—not necessarily when you are looking for more things to do—but I've found it worthwhile to explore them as they arise. And you need to reach out to people... to make contacts, network, share knowledge and build partnerships. I believe our GME enterprise has been successful because we've been doing these things well."

Malcolm D. Orr, MD, Ph.D., Professor of Anesthesiology at the School of Medicine, affirmed that Dr. Bready practices what she preaches. "Dr. Bready avails herself of every opportunity for interaction with all levels of medical students, administrators, faculty, residents and staff," he said. "During her tenure at the University, her leadership, academic achievements and work ethic have greatly contributed to the success of the Department of Anesthesiology as well as the University."



At Reunion Weekend in October 2008, Lois Bready, MD (1977) received the School of Medicine's 2008 Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Alumni Association. Pictured here from left to right are Katharine King (aunt), Elaine Bready (sister-in-law), Doug Bready (brother), Eva Bready, seated (mother), Abby Holahan (daughter), Lois Bready, Joseph Holahan (husband), Katy Holahan (daughter and member of the School of Medicine Class of 2013), and Dan Zentner (Katy's fiancé).

In recognition of her nearly three decades of outstanding service and leadership at the School of Medicine, Bready received the 2008 Distinguished Alumnus Award. In his letter nominating Bready for the award, Christopher A. Bracken, MD, Ph.D., former Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Anesthesiology at the School of Medicine, commented on Bready's broad range of skills. He noted that she is "an exceptionally well-organized and astute administrator and a gifted physician and educator."

As Dr. Bready leads GME in the future, she will need to use those same skills to negotiate the changing accreditation landscape. "The Institute of Medicine's 2008 recommendations aimed at improving patient safety through further reductions in duty hours, more focused faculty supervision, and better patient handoffs, pose significant challenges for GME programs throughout the country," Bready noted. "We view these challenges as an opportunity to work cooperatively with the GME Committee, program directors, and faculty to maintain the quality of the educational experience and appropriate work environment for our more than 700 residents who work and learn on the San Antonio and Lower Rio Grande Valley campuses in our teaching hospitals."

