

## **Lynn Hardy Yeakel**

Lynn Hardy Yeakel, MSM, is Director of Drexel University College of Medicine's Institute for Women's Health and Leadership® (IWHL) and holds the Betty A. Cohen Chair in Women's Health.

Since Yeakel came to Drexel in 2002, the IWHL has grown in size and stature, earning a significant institutional commitment in the College of Medicine's 2007-2012 Strategic Plan as one of the medical school's top priorities. In addition to investing in extensive IWHL program expansion, Drexel has constructed a new building on the College of Medicine's campus in Philadelphia to house the Institute and its core programs. Yeakel co-chaired a fundraising campaign to raise an additional \$1.8 million for a permanent home for the Legacy Center (Archives and Special Collections) in the new building. IWHL, the International Center for Executive Leadership in Academics (home of the ELAM and ELATE programs) and the Legacy Center moved in at the end of 2009.

A major national initiative of the Institute, created and co-chaired by Yeakel, is ***VISION 2020***, a ten-year project to achieve women's equality by the year 2020 when the nation will celebrate the centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, granting women the right to vote. The project was launched in October 2010 with ***An American Conversation about Women and Leadership***® at the National Constitution Center (NCC) in Philadelphia. Delegates from all 50 states and the District of Columbia participated. A women's history exhibition, commissioned by the Institute, opened at the NCC in conjunction with the Conversation and remained there through March 2011. Yeakel and her team have raised over \$3 million for Vision 2020.

Other programs developed and led by Yeakel include "Conversations about Women's Health," a popular community education program, and the Woman One Award and Scholarship Fund, raising funds for medical tuition scholarships for minority women. There are currently ten Woman One Scholars, in all four classes, studying medicine at Drexel, plus eight who have graduated and are practicing medicine in underserved areas. Each Scholar receives \$80,000 in tuition support over four years. The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Woman One, celebrated in 2012, generated over \$550,000, fully funding four new Scholars.

A founder and former chief executive of the first and largest women's funding federation in the nation, Women's Way, Yeakel won the primary in a U.S. Senate race in 1992 – the "Year of the Woman" – and nearly unseated the incumbent Senator in a nationally-publicized race. The following year she lectured on more than a dozen college campuses and for numerous organizations across the U.S. and abroad.

Appointed by President Clinton as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Director for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Yeakel served in that role from 1994-2000. Her leadership initiatives there included the Freedom from Fear campaign to end family violence and "Envisioning a Healthier Philadelphia," a coalition of more than 60 public and private organizations dedicated to improving access to health care. She also chaired the region's Welfare Reform Team, the Child Health Initiative and the Combined Federal Campaign and served on the national committee to implement the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). In 2010 she was appointed to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Health Care Reform Implementation Advisory Committee, developing recommendations for the Governor on the new federal legislation.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate and former trustee of Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Yeakel received a Master of Science in Management degree from the American College. She is a past president or chair of many local and national non-profit organizations, including among others the Family Planning Council, the Junior League of Philadelphia, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century League, the Citizens' Coalition for Energy Efficiency, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy and the board of overseers of the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Pennsylvania. She serves currently as an advisor to the Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research, as an advisor to the Center for the Advancement of Girls at the Agnes Irwin School and on the Board of the Bryn Mawr Film Institute. She was a member of the Advisory Board of the Penn/ICOWHI 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, entitled *Cities and Women's Health: Global Perspectives* held in Philadelphia in the spring of 2010.

A member of the Pennsylvania Women's Forum and the Forum of Executive Women, and a Fellow of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, Lynn Yeakel has received numerous honors and awards, including the

Pennsylvania Citizen Action Award and the Lucretia Mott Award. She was named a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania in 1989, received the MCP/Gimbel Award for humanitarian contributions in 1987, and was named a “Woman of Distinction” by the Philadelphia Business Journal in 2004. In 2006, she was identified as a Top Connector by LEADERSHIP Philadelphia and in 2008 was honored again by that organization as one of its top 50 alumni during the celebration of its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In May 2009, she received the first Susan Myers Leadership and Community Activism Award from the Junior League of Philadelphia and in November 2010 received the John Gardner Lifetime Achievement Award from Common Cause. In November 2011, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Red Cross of Southeastern Pennsylvania and in March 2012 was honored by the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania with a Take the Lead Award. She is a frequent speaker at women’s and girls’ leadership forums. Her autobiographical book, “A Will and a Way,” was published in Fall 2010.