



the medical center hour

*Medicine & Society in Conversation*

A program of the Center for Health Humanities and Ethics  
University of Virginia School of Medicine

Wednesday, 10 February 2021

12:00-1:00 pm

A Zoom Webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87684988960> Passcode: 763749

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*History of the Health Sciences Lecture*

## THE DOCTORS BLACKWELL

### HOW TWO PIONEERING SISTERS BROUGHT MEDICINE TO WOMEN AND WOMEN TO MEDICINE

Janice P. Nimura MA

New York, NY

Author, *The Doctors Blackwell*

Marcia Day Childress PhD, moderator

The world recoiled at the idea of a *woman* doctor, yet Elizabeth Blackwell persisted, and in 1849 became the first woman in the U.S. to receive an MD. Her achievement made her an icon. Her younger sister Emily followed her, eternally eclipsed despite being the more brilliant physician of the pair. Together, they founded the first hospital staffed entirely by women, in New York City. While the Doctors Blackwell were visionary and tenacious—they prevailed against a resistant male medical establishment—they weren't always aligned with women's movements, or even with each other. In this Medical Center Hour, biographer Janice Nimura celebrates the Blackwells as pioneers, change agents, and, for women in medicine today, compelling yet somewhat equivocal role models.

*Co-presented with Historical Collections, Claude Moore Health Sciences Library*

Suggested resources:

1. Janice P. Nimura. *The Doctors Blackwell: How Two Pioneering Sisters Brought Medicine to Women and Women to Medicine*. W. W. Norton, 2021.
2. Janice P. Nimura. The way Americans remember the Blackwell sisters shortchanges their legacy. *Smithsonian Magazine*, 6 Jan 2021:  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/way-americans-remember-blackwell-sisters-shortchanges-their-incredible-legacy-180976672/>
3. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health. *Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America's Women Physicians*.  
Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell: [https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography\\_35.html](https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_35.html)  
and Dr. Emily Blackwell: [https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography\\_36.html](https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_36.html)

**Janice P. Nimura MA** is a writer who lives in New York City. A graduate of Yale and Columbia Universities, she received a Public Scholars Award from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of her work on *The Doctors Blackwell*. Since its publication in January 2021, *The Doctors Blackwell* has received generous notice in newspapers, magazines, and other media. Ms. Nimura's previous book, *Daughters of the Samurai: A Journey from East to West and Back*, was a *New York Times* Notable book in 2015. Her essays and book reviews have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Smithsonian*, *The Rumpus*, and *LiHub*, among other publications. "The one thing I know I'll never be is a historian," Ms. Nimura told her college guidance counselor in 1988. She thought she wanted to be a doctor, but life intervened: she majored in English at Yale, worked in publishing, moved to Japan with her Tokyo-born husband, and completed a master's degree in East Asian studies at Columbia upon their return to her native New York. She grew into an understanding that history is made of stories and fell in love with archival treasure-hunting, especially when it led to the forgotten lives of border-crossing nineteenth-century women. If Ms. Nimura's first book grew out of her personal interest in the earliest encounters between Japan and the U.S., her new book circles back to her interest in medicine, in the context of her work in women's history.

Ms. Nimura declared no personal/professional relationships with commercial entities producing healthcare goods and/or services related to this presentation. Medical Center Hour planning group members M.D. Childress PhD; R.J. Bonnie LLB; R. Carpenter DrNP; J.F. Childress PhD; M.F. Marshall PhD; J. Mutter MD MA; K. Reid PhD RN FNP-C CNL; L. Shepherd JD have no personal/professional relationships with commercial entities producing healthcare goods and/or services, while R. Dillingham MD MPH reports interests with Gilead and Warm Health Technology Inc. UVA Office of Continuing Medical Education faculty and staff have no personal/professional financial relationships with commercial entities producing healthcare goods and/or services.

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Next Medical Center Hour: Wednesday, 17 February 2021, 12:00-1:00 pm

*A John F. Anderson Memorial Lecture*

LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE—TRANSFORMING PRACTICE

Kimberly D. Acquaviva PhD MSW CSE, Betty Norman Norris Professor of Nursing, UVA

Timothy B. Short MD, Chief Medical Officer and Director, Education Institute,

Hospice of the Piedmont, Charlottesville VA

*Co-presented with Melton D. and Muriel Haney Conference on*

*Compassionate Care at the End of Life, School of Nursing*

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Medical Center Hour is free of charge and open to the public. For more information, see  
Center for Health Humanities and Ethics:

<https://med.virginia.edu/biomedical-ethics/medical-center-hour/>

Watch Medical Center Hour recordings at <http://www.youtube.com/uvamch>

**How to Claim Continuing Education (CE) Credit for Medical Center Hour:**

Using Google Chrome or Firefox on a phone, tablet, or computer, go to <https://cmetracker.net/UVA> and log into your CE account with your email and password. Choose 'CE Certificate-Eval for Credit,' enter Activity Code **140397**, then complete and submit your evaluation. You have 30 days from this program date (10 Feb 2021) to evaluate and obtain credit for this program. This is the only way you can receive credit for this Medical Center Hour.

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In support of improving patient care, the University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

*This activity was planned by and for the healthcare team, and learners will receive 1 Interprofessional Continuing Education (IPCE) credit/session for learning and change.*

Learning objectives:

1. Understand the challenges of being the first woman to receive the MD in the U.S. and establish the first hospital staffed entirely by women.
2. Consider the lives and legacy of the Doctors Blackwell and their impact on the medical care of women and for the cause of women in medicine.