

Remembrance of Edith P. Mitchell, MD, MACP, FCCP, FRCP

*By Eleanor M. Walker, MD
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Dr. Mitchell was the Enterprise Vice President for Cancer Disparities at Jefferson Health's Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center, as well as Director of their Center to Eliminate Cancer Disparities and Associate Director for Diversity Affairs. Dr. Mitchell, a medical oncologist, was also Professor of Medicine and Medical Oncology at Thomas Jefferson University's Sidney Kimmel Medical College. Dr. Mitchell was named an honorary member of ASTRO in 2017.

A retired U.S. Air Force Brigadier General, Dr. Mitchell was the first woman physician to attain that rank, completed 36 years in the armed forces and was awarded more than 15 military service medals and ribbons, including the Legion of Merit, Air Force Achievement and Commendation Medals, and the Humanitarian Service Medal. She supported fellow veterans through her work with the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Philadelphia.

Dr. Mitchell had a long history of activism and service to others by working with underserved populations to help improve healthcare in this nation. Her work stemmed from her beginnings in rural Tennessee. Her research examined ethnic, socioeconomic, and other factors affecting clinical trial participation and accrual barriers among minorities. Her research and papers also focused on novel drug evaluations, chemo-radiation strategies, new therapeutic regimens, supportive care, and patient selection criteria for clinical trials in breast, colorectal and pancreatic cancers, and other GI malignancies.

Dr. Mitchell was the 116th President of the National Medical Association (NMA) and Editor of the Journal of the National Medical Association (JNMA). In her role as President of the NMA, she established the annual Jane Cooke Wright Cancer Symposium (Dr. Cooke was one of the five founding members of ASCO and a Black woman) at the NMA Convention and Scientific Assembly. Dr. Mitchell received numerous honors and awards from the scientific, civic and community organizations. Of note, she served on the National Cancer Institute's Blue-Ribbon Panel advising on then Vice-President Joe Biden's National Cancer Moonshot initiative and the NIH Council on Councils. Dr. Mitchell was appointed to the President's Cancer Panel from 2019-2023. She participated in committees for the NCI, ECOG-ACRIN, ASCO, NRG Oncology and the American Association for Cancer Research.

Personally, Dr. Mitchell was a source of inspiration and influenced the lives and careers of so many in her community and professionally. She was also a wonderful wife and mother who left a legacy of excellence for all who knew her.