

HONORING MADELINE BRILL NELSON

May 8, 1924 - March 4, 2017



Roz Babener, Madeline Brill Nelson, and Roscoe Nelson III

It is with great sadness that the Center for Ethics in Health Care acknowledges the death of Madeline Brill Nelson. Maddy died peacefully at her home on Saturday, March 4, 2017. She will be profoundly missed and eternally loved by all those with whom she connected.

There was a quiet stillness to Maddy that drew so many into her life. Her bearing was warm, upright and dignified; her gaze was always alert and she had a smile even as she neared the end of her life. She was a genuine listener, and observer who noticed the tiny details and understood at a deep level how each related to the things that matter most in life.

Maddy's life was most notably marked by her passion to make the world a better place. Modestly, and without fanfare, she dedicated herself to countless causes within the community over the course of her long life. Propelled by her empathetic character and her gift of seeing and understanding need, Maddy was the very first donor to step forward to support the Center for Ethics in Health Care at OHSU when it was still but a dream in the eyes of its founders. So wholeheartedly did she grasp its potential and believe in its mission that she fell easily into the role of quiet pioneer --a role that came naturally to her and was inspired by the legacy of her father, Dr. Isador C. Brill.

As a young girl Maddy would often accompany this beloved and pioneering physician on his weekend rounds in southwest Portland. Observing carefully his compassion and unwavering

attention for each of his patients, she learned early on that caring and commitment were the cornerstones of his work. She recognized how critical a role he played in the lives of so many. And she resolved to continue this legacy of service to the community through unstinting dedication to the highest standards of medical professionalism and teaching.

It was through the lens of these tender memories that Maddy first envisioned what the Center for Ethics in Health Care could be. More than twenty five years have now passed since the Center was established, and Maddy was there from the beginning showing in countless ways the depth of her caring and the expansiveness of her vision. With quiet pride, remarkable generosity and her innate ability to understand the Center's work, she continued her distinguished family's legacy as a way to honor her father's work, and his extraordinary humanity through the establishment of the Madeline Brill Nelson Chair in Ethics Education.

When asked once to describe her father, Maddy offered the following words, "Dedicated, Always trying to heal. Quiet. Happy to help and serve. Visionary." Such phrases also perfectly describe Maddy.

It is impossible to express adequately what Maddy has given to the Center over these many years, and the many lives she has touched. She set the highest standard imaginable for integrity and commitment. And it is with enormous gratitude and appreciation that we have the honor of continuing her legacy, and the legacy of her father, through the work that we do at the Center now and into the future.

Rest in peace, Madeline Brill Nelson, Guardian of the World.