

Barbara Ross-Lee, D.O., FACOFP

Vice President for Health Sciences & Medical Affairs and
Site Dean for NYIT at Arkansas NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine

Barbara Ross-Lee, D.O., FACOFP, currently the Vice President for Health Sciences and Medical Affairs at the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine, is the first African-American female to serve as dean of a United States medical school. She is also the first osteopathic physician to serve a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellowship. Dr. Ross-Lee has an extensive background in health policy issues and serves as an advisor on primary care, medical education, minority health, women's health and rural health care issues on the federal and state levels. She has lectured widely and published numerous scholarly articles on a variety of medical and health-care issues. She has received seven honorary degrees and numerous national awards.

Dr. Ross-Lee has recently completed her appointment by the Institute of Medicine, the health arm of the National Academy of Sciences, where she joined 18 other prominent medical professionals and scholars on its Consensus Committee on the Governance and Financing of Graduate Medical Education (GME). She was the only osteopathic physician on this national committee, which is responsible for recommending reforms to the GME system.

Dr. Ross-Lee graduated from Wayne State University in Detroit with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and chemistry, and a Master's degree in teaching special populations. After graduating from the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (MSU-COM) in September 1973, she ran a solo family practice in Detroit. Her academic medicine career began in 1978 at MSU-COM, where she served as chairperson of the Department of Family Medicine from 1983-1990, and Associate Dean for Health Policy from 1990-1993. She served as a commissioned officer, United States Naval Reserves Medical Corps, from 1982-1994, achieving the rank of Captain.

In 1990, Dr. Ross-Lee became the first osteopathic physician selected as a Health Policy Fellow of the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. During this one-year program in Washington DC, she served as Legislative Assistant for Health for Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. Upon completing her fellowship, she immediately began working on creating a fellowship program by which other DOs could obtain training in health policy analysis, then generally unavailable for osteopathic medical practitioners. Her goal was to prepare future leaders of the osteopathic medical profession to engage in policy formation and the legislative process. Her hope was that the program would be a catalyst for enabling osteopathic leaders to "take the high ground" when addressing health care issues, by training them to dispassionately and objectively consider the needs of patients in matters of access, quality, and cost. Her desire was to have her Fellows undergo a transformative educational process comparable to what she experienced as a Robert Wood Johnson Fellow.

Dr. Ross-Lee achieved her goal, realized her hope and fulfilled her desire. Today, she serves as the director of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Health Policy Fellowship program, which prepares mid-

career osteopathic physicians and others connected to the profession for leadership roles in health policy. She also directs the Training in Policy Studies (TIPS) program, a similar program for post-graduate osteopathic physicians (medical residents). The Health Policy Fellowship program was launched in 1993; the TIPS program began in 2002.

Also in 1993, Dr. Ross-Lee became Dean of the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine (OUCOM), a position she held until she joined NYIT in February 2001 as Vice President for Health Sciences and Medical Affairs. In addition to her Vice Presidential position at NYIT, she served as Dean of the School of Allied Health and Life Sciences from February 2001 through June 2002, and Dean of the NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine from July 2002 through June 2006.

Dr. Ross-Lee's leadership and influence is exemplified by the number of prominent positions she has held within the osteopathic profession and beyond. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the National Osteopathic Medical Association (NOMA), a medical association of minority osteopathic physicians. She has been Chair of the AOA Council on Pre-doctoral Education and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) Assembly of Presidents, Executive Director of NOMA, Chair of the AACOM Board of Governors, a member of the Board of Directors of the National Fund for Medical Education, President of the Board of Directors of the Association for Academic Health Centers, and a member of the National Advisory Committee for Research on Women's Health (HHS/NIH). Dr. Ross-Lee is a fellow of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians.

In 2003, Dr. Ross-Lee was featured at a National Library of Medicine photo and text exhibition entitled "Changing the Face of Medicine." She received a Medical History Makers Award in 2007 from The History Makers Foundation. In 2008, she was named as one of the AOA's first 40 Great Pioneers of Osteopathic Medicine and was given an Imperial Presidential Citation by then AOA President Peter B. Ajluni, DO. In January 2011, she served as Co-Director for Program Development for the first Annual Martin Luther King Center for Health Equity Summit, a position she still holds. Dr. Ross-Lee delivered the A.T. Still Memorial Lecture at the 2011 AOA House of Delegates meeting. In 2012, she was appointed by the Institute of Medicine to the Consensus Committee on the Governance and Financing of Graduate Medical Education. Also in 2012, Dr. Ross-Lee was appointed to chair the board of directors for the Institute for the Advancement of Multicultural & Minority Medicine, which focuses on eliminating health disparities in multicultural communities. In 2013, Dr. Ross-Lee received the AOA Distinguished Service Certificate, its highest honor. The Distinguished Service Certificate recognizes leaders of the osteopathic medical profession who have made outstanding accomplishments and meritorious service in scientific, educational or professional affairs.

Dr. Ross-Lee has always been proud to be an osteopathic physician and makes her identity known wherever she goes. A perfect example of Dr. Ross-Lee's osteopathic pride was her 2011 A.T. Still Memorial Lecture: Drawing on the vision that Dr. Still had for the osteopathic medical profession, Dr. Ross-Lee urged DOs to continue to uphold his legacy by being "the medical profession that produces physicians who serve people of this nation and world **better**—through a clinical focus on population needs, a strong educational continuum and innovation."