MEET THE BOARD: This is a series of articles spotlighting members of CARDIOLOGY TODAY's Editorial Board.

Roger Blumenthal dedicated to prevention of heart disease

The preventive cardiologist passed over a career in sports medicine.

by Judith Rusk
CARDIOLOGY TODAY MANAGING EDITOR

When **Roger S. Blumenthal, MD,** started his medical school career, he wanted to be a team physician, preferably for his favorite team, the Washington Redskins.

So he chose to go to the Cornell/New York Hospital Medical Center where he thought he would take extra orthopedic electives at the Hospital for Special Surgery.

"I liked orthopedics and I worked with the team physician of the New York Giants, Russ Warren, in medical school," Blumenthal, professor of medicine and director of the Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease, said.

But once he started studying sports medicine and orthopedics, he realized his heart was into something else: cardiology.

"I liked cardiology a lot when I was a medical intern and a junior intern," said Blumenthal, a member of the Preventive Cardiology section of the CARDIOLOGY TODAY editorial board. "A lot of what we decide to go into is in a large part due to who we can sort of identify with, what their personalities are like."

With dynamic mentors – such as **Steve Achuff, MD, Ken Baughman, MD,** and **Arthur Feldman, MD** – Blumenthal decided to pursue a new medical dream.

The path to prevention

Blumenthal is interested in atherosclerotic vascular disease. Early in his career he spent a great deal of time in the cardiac cath lab and did important cath lab research with **Steve Reis, MD,** and **Jeff Brinker, MD,** on the effects of intravenous estrogen on coronary artery hemodynamics. He worked closely with the late **Trudy Bush, MD,** a prominent cardiovascular epidemiologist on the landmark HERS and PEPI trial that studied hormone replacement therapy.

One of the things that he enjoys in cardiology and one of the things that appealed to him when he decided to pursue the field, he said, is procedures. While he did a great deal of coronary interventional work, his career started to take a new direction in 1997 after he married **Wendy Post, MD,** another cardiologist at Johns Hopkins.

"I had to really think about whether I wanted to get called in in the middle of the night to do interventional procedures in persons with acute coronary syndromes," he said.

In 1999, Blumenthal gave up his cath lab work and pursued preventive cardiology as his major focus.

"The Ciccarone Center is very interested in genetic epidemiology, successful cardiovascular aging. We have access to a number of large datasets such as the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis," Blumenthal said.



Blumenthal enjoys playing lacross with his son Ross, 8, in his leisure time.

Through his work there and in preventive cardiology at Hopkins, he has had a number of personal accomplishments in his research spanning the field. These include the ABCDE approach to prevention, which he worked on with colleagues **Ty Gluckman, MD,** and **Andrew DeFilippis, MD.** The ABCDE provides clinicians and patients with a comprehensive approach to primary and secondary prevention of CVD.

He has also been able to maintain his interest in sports. He is periodically consulted to see competitive college athletes in the mid-Atlantic area who develop symptoms that may be related to CVD.

Heartfest

Another accomplishment that Blumenthal has to his credit, along with colleagues at the Ciccarone Center, is hosting the annual Heartfest benefit.

Heartfest is an evening incorporating practical, educational information about heart disease. While the band **Stephen "Stevie V." Valenti, MD,** and the Heart Attackers provides live music spanning generations, Heartfest attendees can sample heart-healthy foods from various Maryland-area restaurants. The benefit enters its 18th year this year, with proceeds benefiting the Ciccarone Center, established in memory of Johns Hopkins Lacrosse Coach Henry "Chic" Ciccarone.

Blumenthal loved journalism while in college at Hopkins, he said. As a reporter for the university newspaper and as assistant sports information director, he covered Ciccarone's Hopkins teams that won three straight NCAA lacrosse titles.

"He was a fiery, dynamic personality, someone who everyone enjoyed being around," Blumenthal said. Ciccarone died after his third MI in 1988. "At that time, I realized that we knew relatively little about what caused recurrent heart attacks."

Every year cardiologists are honored for their achievements. This year, **Eric J. Topol, MD,** director of the Scripps Translational Science Institute and chief academic officer for Scripps Health, and **Peter O. Kwiterovich Jr., MD,** professor of pediatrics and medicine and cholesterol disorder specialist at Johns Hopkins, will be honored at Heartfest.

Career at Hopkins

Blumenthal received his bachelor's degree in natural sciences at Johns Hopkins before attending Cornell University Medical College. He did his internship, residency, clinical and fellowships at Johns Hopkins.

In addition to serving as director of the Ciccarone Center, he is also a professor of medicine at the university in 2007.

"To get promoted to full professor at Hopkins was a special accomplishment for a busy clinician and clinical researcher," he said. He is also chair of the ACC Committee on Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease and a member of the national spokesperson panel for the AHA.



Roger S. Blumenthal, MD
Professor of medicine and director of the Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease.
Member, Preventive Cardiology, CARDIOLOGY TODAY Editorial Board

Hopkins isn't the only institution that has honored Blumenthal's dedication to the cardiology field.

Last year, he was named one of America's top 10 cardiologists by Men's Health magazine.

For his work with the AHA over the years, he received the Maryland Affiliate Unsung Hero Award in 2006.

"My career has been an interesting and rewarding one," Blumenthal said.

Still in the game

The 47-year-old may have had a change of heart about becoming a team physician for the Redskins, but Blumenthal still likes to watch the team's games, and he is very active in a number of sports in his free time.

"I love to play sports like tennis and basketball. I'm an avid golfer with a single digit handicap," he said.

Blumenthal exercises two to three times a week at the Maryland Athletic Club & Wellness Center and plays golf at least once a week between May and September. He plays tennis once or twice a week and he often shares a tennis lesson with his 8-year-old son, Ross, once a week; and he also helps coach Ross' lacrosse team.

Being active is par for the course, he said.

"I stay active. We're always preaching the benefits of prevention and better lifestyle habits, and I think it's incumbent upon us to practice what we preach," he said. **CT**

For more information:

For more information about Heartfest visit www.heartfest.org

Read more about the ABCDE approach to prevention. Visit www.cardiologytoday.com/cteditorial.asp and click on the Guest Editorial for June 2007 titled, "'ABCDE' makes an effective prevention tool."