

The Silent Partner: Susan R. Levin

By Sue Vogan

When planning an interview, I assume that my questions are phrased correctly to elicit a meaningful response and I imagine that the work and life of the subject is covered well and the article complete. However, it never occurred to me that I was missing an essential part of my interviews with many famous medical professionals -- this would be the *silent partner* whose omission renders many editorials incomplete.

My interviews with Dr. Warren M. Levin, the “*East Coast Dean of Alternative Medicine*”, have appeared in various outlets and are always well received. However, there is a Mrs. Warren M. Levin that has been missing from each and every piece. I would like to formally introduce the silent partner in Dr. Levin’s life – Susan R. Levin.

To begin, I found this woman fascinating and her talents more than her station at first reveals. It is often quoted that, “Behind every great man there is a great woman.” And nothing could be truer than when we speak Susan Levin’s name. I would soon learn that silent does not translate to idle.

Being the wife of a renowned doctor with a busy practice, a mother and step-mother and keeper of the Levin castle, one would believe this exhausting enough. But her calling does not begin or end there. Susan Levin went after the art of living and working with pleasure and an insatiable thirst for more.



Susan attended New York University, earning a BS. This would be a firm foundation where she would start developing herself into the business woman she always knew lived inside her. She had a direction – and it was UP. In 1982, she designed what would be the first state of the art Integrative Medical Center in New York City with her husband, Dr. Warren Levin.



I ask Susan if there is a memorable moment in time that stands out. She replies, “In 1979, I had the honor to travel and meet with Dr. Linus Pauling, PH.D several times as well as Dr. Jonas Salk some years ago as well as assisting in the development, planning and coordination of the 2nd International Symposium on Stress in Monte Carlo, sponsored by the Hans Selye Foundation.”

In the early years of her marriage, before baby Erika, Susan immersed herself in expanding her husband's practice and continued assisting in the daily routines of the alternative medicine clinic. Once their daughter went off to school, Susan's career focused on the intimate operations of the thriving medical practice, but she had prepared for this time in her life – learning from the best how to market patient expansion, improve cash flow and profit, and how to select, design and construct sites for growing medical practices. There is more to operating a successful business than opening the doors and Susan could now consider herself an expert in continuity of care and patient relationship management, medical office administration, and start-up with high-growth operation potential.



Beginning in 1977, Susan understood how important it was to be connected. She became a regular fixture at ACAM, AAEM, ILADS, and A4M as well as attended their annual conferences. She was invited to speak on various topics including anti-aging, medical management challenges, designing a holistic health center, medical office management and challenges of an integrative physician' practice and personal life.

But, Susan was not one to ever let the grass grow underneath her feet. She spent the next twelve years as the Executive Director at World Health Medical Group in New York. She became certified in teaching Protein Sparing Modified Fast to physicians and their patients under a licensed physician. And as side interests, she became a licensed real estate broker and even learned to speak conversational French. Another little known fact is that Susan has a secondary passion -- interior design. Her home is garnished with style and a taste that would quench anyone's taste for simple elegance. She has also done the same for medical offices. She transforms a bare or drab canvas into a functional masterpiece that even Monet or van Gogh would be proud of. Whether working with a small area of 1,300 square feet or as large as 6,500 square feet, Susan can create the space that speaks grandeur. To say the least, this woman has panache.

These were not ways to pass time for this energetic woman. Instead, they were more building blocks for a career that she is passionate about – medicine. She kept to her mission to be the



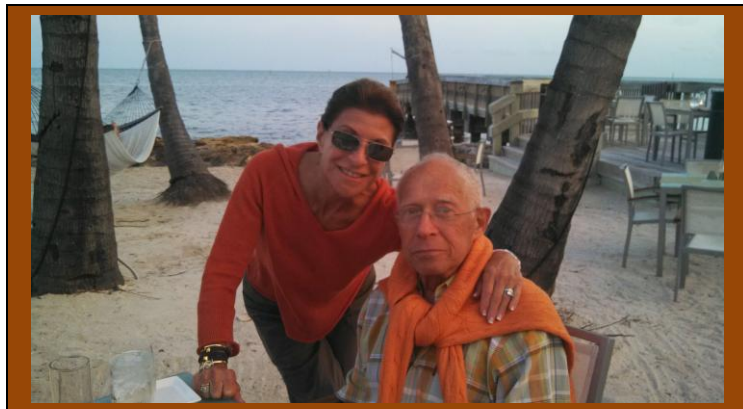
best by investigating and studying various aspects of the medical profession, which lead her in identifying an early market for anti-aging therapy for Physicians for Complementary Medicine in New York in 1994. She was instrumental in positioning the practice in a one-of-the-firsts to use this anti-aging therapy. During this same

time, Susan set up an in-house vitamin dispensary that recognized an increase in gross of \$400K, while streamlining the overhead by \$32K annually. She was also able to increase new patients by 30 per week once she solidified a weekly radio spot on a syndicated station for the firm's practicing physician.

Just five years later, Susan would find herself even more in demand and was involved in the birth of the L.I.F.E. Research Clinics, LLC. There she would be a principal leader in an FDA study that resulted in approval of a therapy and was jointly responsible for expanding the firm to a national level that led to five and six figure increases for participating physicians. She would soon be on her way to Brazil and there, as well in various locations throughout the United States, she developed and presented marketing strategies at numerous workshops.

Not one for a lag in education, Susan absorbed various lines of medical software, ways to improve efficiency within a medical practice, and stretched her field to include dental and surgical settings. She became human resources, to streamline personal, and ultimately became a visionary that brought ideas to life.

In 2012, Susan would take on another aspect of medicine – relocating an entire practice. She would negotiate all phases of the move, position all staff for a smooth transition, and expertly arrange details so that the physician and patients would experience barely a ripple in routine. Anyone who has moved can relate to some of the tasks involved, but moving a medical practice equates to relocating many families all at one time. Records of each patient are a sensitive item more precious than diamonds or gold. And when you have patients located on various points of globe, care must be taken to insure that seamless service ensues. By now, Susan was trained in EHR systems, was responsible for preparing prescriptions, ordering laboratory testing, and



provided backup support in patient education. She had come full circle in understanding the administrative and clinical side of medicine. She would now box up the office and her expertise and move it all to a new setting. There would be other physicians, a larger staff, and more patients. For many, this would be a daunting relocation. To Susan, it was yet another opportunity to add to

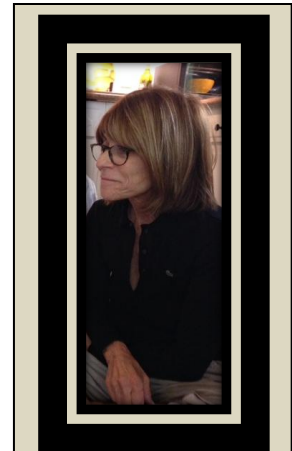
her experiences. In the end, she made sure everyone came through without a break in routine or service.

Earlier this year, Dr. Levin decided to retire after more than 50 years of practice. This would be yet another challenge for Susan. She would be handling all aspects of the closing of the practice from finding patients other expert medical care to boxing up personal items for storage. It would bring mixed emotions sprinkled with tears and laughter. A lifetime of working together would now be coming to an end. Susan met the change head on, just as she had always done

when something had to be done. The most difficult part of the project would be the farewells to patients. From the most recent to the long standing, it was bittersweet.

Now that the final adjustments have been made and the dust has settled, Susan has decided to continue with her passion – the business of medicine in all aspects. She is sure that other practices out there could only benefit from all she has learned and accomplished and she is actively searching for her next assignment. Whether it be a new practice or one that needs refurbishing, Susan Levin is up for the challenge. With all that she brings to any practice, the benefits will readily be realized.

I have known Susan Levin many years, but not until this interview did I realize her accomplishments. To say the least, she has been modest. I now feel that I have a considerable acquaintance with her. She is lovely, inside and out; intelligent and resourceful; has a spirit that is unmatched; possesses a sense of humor and gracious style; and she is everything you would ever want in a silent partner. I am blessed to know such a human being – for they are far and few between of her caliber.



“One frequently only finds out how really beautiful a woman is, until after considerable acquaintance with her.” – Mark Twain