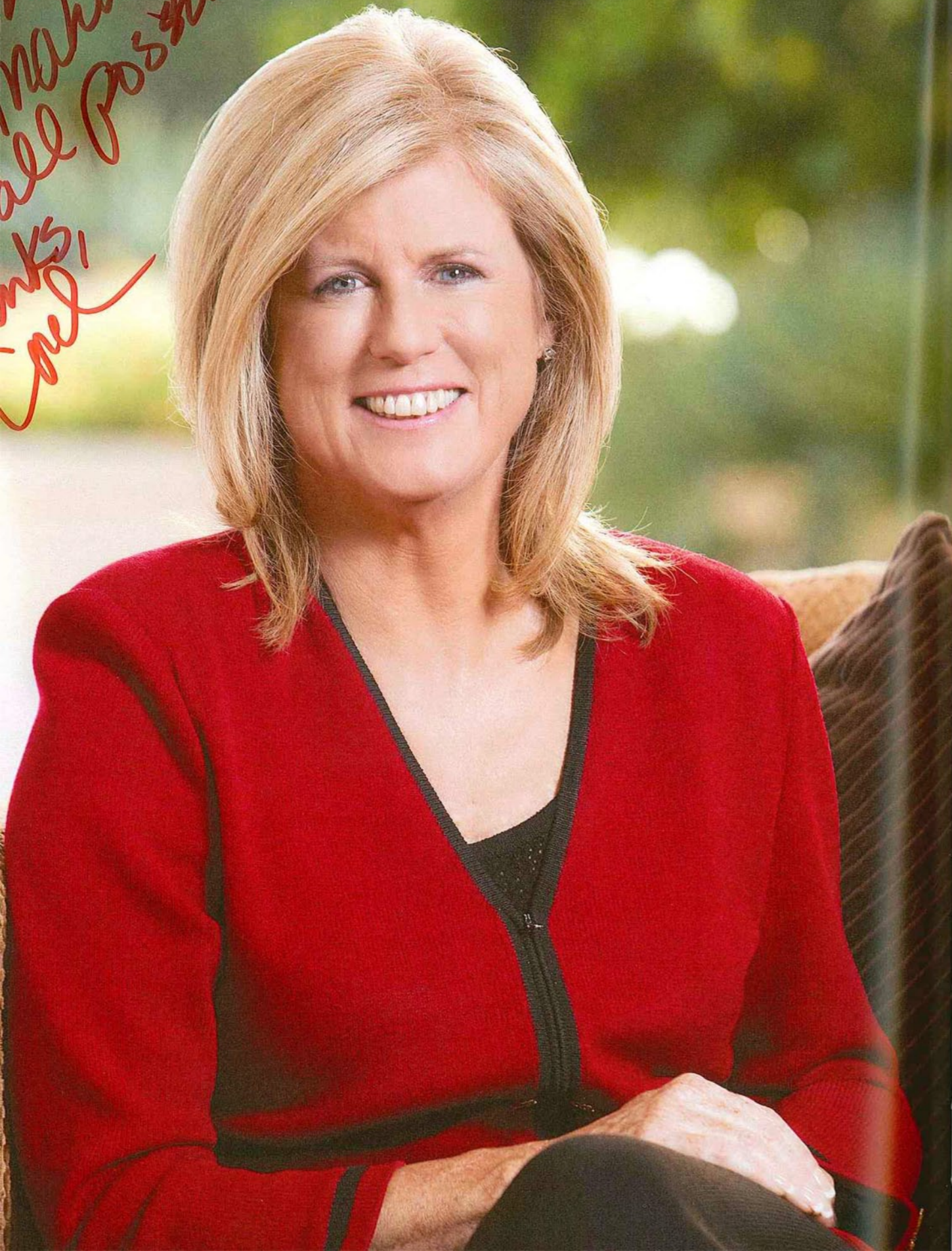


making  
all possible  
steps!



## CORAL QUIET

SCIENCE / MEDICINE / TECHNOLOGY

As a child, Dr. Coral Quiet eyed a career as a veterinarian.

But when her overnight attempt to care for an ailing kitten ended with her finding it dead the next morning, she had a change of heart.

"I was so traumatized," Quiet recalls. "I decided that taking care of humans would be the best decision because those patients could talk and tell me what was wrong."

Today, that innocent feline's fate has sealed the survival of thousands of breast cancer patients who have come to Arizona from all over the world for Quiet's innovative treatments that are less invasive, less painful and less scarring than traditional methods used to battle the disease.

The radiation oncologist and breast cancer specialist's techniques emphasize breast conservation over mastectomy and have attracted women ranging from ages 23-95, to her practice since Quiet moved to the state in 1993.

At the time, there was no practice specializing in just breast cancer and only 20 percent of patients were being treated with the conservation methods of lumpectomy and radiation. That meant 80 percent of women were losing their breasts, often needlessly. Quiet aimed to change that statistic.

When she started practicing in Arizona, the state had a rate of mastectomy procedures that was higher than the national average. Two decades later, the rate has decreased to the average.

When Quiet began her residency at the University of Chicago as a surgeon in 1991, the common treatment for breast cancer was mastectomy, often removing them down to the ribs. Although lumpectomy was just as effective, the thought was if a big enough cut were made around the cancer, it would not spread.

At the time, Quiet was a rarity as there were few women in that field. Mostly men were making the decisions to remove body parts that they could not imagine losing because they did not have them. In addition to the disfigurement and blow to a woman's self-esteem, the surgery left patients with physical limitations.

"Imagine if you lose your pectoral muscle, that means that your shoulder no longer remain stable. You have trouble with everyday tasks, like carrying groceries. Women can function around it, but it's a challenge and a significant impairment," Quiet says.

These early experiences shaped Quiet's goals and career path to give women better options. She wanted to empower women and soon after moving to Arizona founded the Arizona Institute for Breast Health, a nonprofit organization that offers a pro bono second opinion service to recently diagnosed women.

"I liked interacting with women and their families in a critical, meaningful time in their lives," she says.

In 2000, Quiet introduced the breast Brachytherapy program, a post-lumpectomy treatment that delivers precise radiation through catheters around the affected area for five days.

In 2009, Quiet co-founded Arizona Breast Cancer Specialists dedicated specifically to using radiation to treat women with the disease. It is the first and perhaps only facility with this mission in the world.

Since then, Quiet as implemented other advanced treatment methods and instruments. She pioneered the SAVI, a new device that has shown to effectively treat women in the early stages while avoiding giving high doses to skin and ribs. In 2010, hers was the first practice in the state to use TrueBeam, a high-precision form of image-guided radiosurgery designed to deliver therapy accurately in shorter sessions.

Regardless of the technology, Quiet's priority is to successfully treat breast cancer patients while allowing them to keep their breasts and self-image intact.

"When we allow women to eradicate their cancer by preserving the breast, they have all of their body parts, the scars are small and the effects of radiation are minor. This is really helpful in keeping the disease in proportion," she says. "The disfiguration is minimal so they don't hate looking in the mirror."

But the treatment process is only part of Quiet's practice. What good is a minimally invasive procedure meant to give women a boost if the environment in which they receive the treatment resembles a dreary clinic?

In her practice's three offices throughout the Phoenix metropolitan area, are waiting rooms that resemble those of a day spa instead of a cancer center. Warm colors and comforting décor await patients.

"We wanted to create an environment where patients would be the most comfortable treated in. We made sure we had all of the treatments available and done in a way that they felt respected and not just a number or Patient X," Quiet says.

Raised in Southern California and New England, Quiet attended Mount Holyoke College, where she earned degrees in chemistry and physics. She continued on to the University of Massachusetts Medical School. She moved to Arizona after completing her residency in Chicago.

Her ultimate goal?

"To find a cure and then take on my second career as a bartender in the Caribbean," Quiet says, chuckling. "Doesn't that sound great?"

But Quiet's strides and efforts in the treatment of the disease that strikes indiscriminately is an all-serious matter. Her practice and dedication to maintaining patients health and dignity has made Arizona a destination for breast cancer sufferers not willing to accept anything less.

Despite her positive work, Quiet, like her surname, says little about the accolades.

"We've really come a long way and made remarkable changes, but I think it's hard to take any degree of pride and rest on our laurels when we remember those who have died from the disease. It keeps me humble and highly motivated," she says.

Early in her career, she remembers a male surgeon asking a breast cancer patient why would she want to save her breast instead of her life. Quiet is thankful that those days are in the very distant past and doing both are realistic options.

"We are able to cure cancer in a minimally disfiguring way," she says. "I hope I was able to contribute in a small way in that progression and being one of many who helped to significantly improve women's healthcare in this country"