

Susan Desmond-Hellmann, M.D., M.P.H.

Susan Desmond-Hellmann, M.D.'82, M.P.H., grew up in Reno, Nevada as one of seven children. Her father worked as a pharmacist and her mother was an English teacher. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in pre-medicine and an M.D. from the University of Nevada, Reno and received her residency training at University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) where she served as chief resident. She is board-certified in internal medicine and medical oncology, and also holds a master's degree in public health from the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health.

Desmond-Hellmann served as the chief executive officer of The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation from 2014 -2020. She was previously the chancellor of the University of California, San Francisco. Melinda Gates, co-chair of the foundation said, "We chose Sue because of her scientific knowledge and deep technical expertise on the foundation's issues, as well as the organizational and leadership skills required to lead a large, growing and dynamic global organization. Sue shares our commitment and passion to create a more equitable world." Bill Gates, co-chair of the foundation stated, "Sue's background in public health policy, research and development, and higher education, make her an exceptional fit for this role. She impressed us as an innovator and an outstanding leader and manager."

An oncologist by training, Desmond-Hellmann is a recognized leader on issues of higher education, public health, drug development, regulatory innovation and health policy. She led UCSF since August 2009, when she became the first woman to serve as the university's chancellor, overseeing all aspects of the university and medical center's strategy, academic programs and operations. She has extensive experience in product development, and a deep understanding of how to bridge applied research to delivery of product. Prior to her tenure at UCSF, she was president of product development at Genentech, where she led the development and introduction of two of the first gene-targeted therapies for cancer, Avastin and Herceptin.

Desmond-Hellmann also served as a member of Genentech's executive committee, beginning in 1996. She served on the boards of directors of Procter and Gamble and Facebook, and was a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's Economic Advisory Council.

She was the University of Nevada, Reno's Foundation Banquet speaker in 2019.

In 2021, Desmond-Hellman was appointed by President Joe Biden to the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST).

Sue Desmond-Hellman has contributed significantly to the scientific and economic advancement of Nevada, the U.S. and the world.