Today, Meharry Medical College will celebrate the life and legacy of one of its most beloved and influential educators with the inaugural Dr. Pamela C. Williams Breast Cancer Memorial Lecture.

Pam was a fixture at Meharry and in Nashville's health care community for more than three decades. She dedicated her life to the field of medicine and to the education and training of generations of promising young medical minds.

She began her career at Meharry Medical College’s School of Medicine in 1975, earning her medical degree in 1981. Pam went on to become an integral part of Meharry's faculty, rising to the rank of tenured professor and executive vice dean of the School of Medicine.

A highly regarded expert in the field of medical education and diversity, Pam was more than a professor to Meharry's medical students. She transformed the student experience at our college and was instrumental in ensuring that Meharry's match rate of graduating seniors continuously exceeded the national match rate. She was a mentor, role model and confidant to nearly every student who passed through our halls. She was also a caring and kindhearted physician.

Pam's legacy — her passion for the mastery of clinical skills, her dedication to the students and her compassion for the sick and underserved — can be found at Meharry and across the nation through our alumni whose lives Pam touched. It also can be found in the memory of any woman who has lost her fight with breast cancer.

As a physician and medical educator, Pam was aware and educated about breast cancer as any woman can be, but the disease still took her life on Nov. 21, 2011. Breast cancer has the ability to hit any woman — regardless of age, race or socioeconomic status or career.

Meharry Medical College has launched the Dr. Pamela C. Williams Breast Cancer Memorial Lecture as a way to educate the Nashville community about breast cancer, its prevention and treatment. I welcome everyone to join us on campus for this lecture and celebrate the life of Pam and all women lost to breast cancer. In honor of our breast cancer warriors, I also urge you to ensure that the women in your life know their breast cancer risks, are talking to their physicians about this disease and doing everything they can to alert themselves to the earliest signs of breast cancer.

The Inaugural Dr. Pamela C. Williams Breast Cancer Memorial Lecture will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m. today at the New Alumni Hall on the campus of Meharry Medical College.

http://www.tennessean.com/article/20131022/OPINION03/310220005/2071