

Susan Desmond-Hellmann

Former CEO, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

With a medical, scientific, and philanthropic career that spans more than 30 years, Dr. Sue Desmond-Hellmann has devoted her life to improving the human condition through innovation. Most recently, she was the CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, leading the organization's vision for a world where every person has the opportunity to live a healthy, productive life.

An innovator and leader in life sciences, Dr. Desmond-Hellmann's diverse training as an oncologist, scientist, and business executive leads to her endless curiosity about the world and her desire to change it for the better. Exclusively represented by [Leading Authorities speakers bureau](#), she shares her unique insights not only on revolutionizing global health, but also on effective and innovative leadership. Using lessons-learned as a trailblazing female leader of one of the world's largest philanthropies, Dr. Desmond-Hellmann inspires audiences with her unparalleled perspective on how to foster an environment of collaboration and relentless innovation to drive disruptive solutions that make an impact.

As CEO of the Gates Foundation for more than five years, Dr. Desmond-Hellmann led the organization's 1,500 employees in its efforts to reduce inequity and combat infectious diseases around the world. Among many achievements, she oversaw the creation of the Gates Medical Research Institute – the world's first nonprofit biotech organization – as well as the launch of the Economic Mobility and Opportunity investment strategy in the U.S. Reflecting on Dr. Desmond-Hellmann's tenure, Melinda Gates said, "Sue brought an incredible set of attributes to the foundation: scientific expertise, tested leadership skills, a passion for building a strong internal culture, and, above all, a dedication to the mission of making the world a healthier, more equal place." She is continuing her work with the Foundation as a senior advisor and board member of the Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute.

Immediately prior to joining the foundation, Dr. Desmond-Hellmann was the first female and ninth overall chancellor of the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF), overseeing all aspects of the university and medical center's strategy and operations. She had previously completed her oncologist clinical training at UCSF in the 1980's, both in the Bay Area and in Uganda, to work on the emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic and cancer. Dr. Desmond-Hellmann credits this as a turning point in her career – sparking her desire to make a difference.

Before UCSF, Dr. Desmond-Hellmann spent 14 years at biotech firm Genentech, where she served as president of product development. She led the development of a number of breakthrough medicines, including two of the first gene-targeted therapies for cancer, Avastin and Herceptin. Her time at Genentech put her at the forefront of the precision medicine revolution, championing the public health approach to save lives by bringing the right interventions, to the right populations, at the right time. For her groundbreaking work, *Forbes* named Dr. Desmond-Hellmann one of the world's seven most "powerful innovators," calling her "a hero to legions of cancer patients."

Among numerous accolades and awards, Dr. Desmond-Hellmann has been listed among *Fortune's* "top 50 most powerful women in business," named to the *NonProfit Times'* 'Power and Influence Top 50' list, inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and elected to the Institute of Medicine. Previously a member of the board of directors at both Facebook and Procter & Gamble, she now serves on the board of directors at Pfizer, is an advisor at GV (formerly Google Ventures), and remains an adjunct professor at UCSF.