

abmasp Barrett Connor



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11/1/88

Irma Gigli, MD
Professor of Medicine
Division of Dermatology
University of California, San Diego Medical Center
225 Dickinson Street
San Diego, CA 92103

Dear Professor Gigli:

I am happy to respond to your October 25 letter concerning **Elizabeth Barret-Connor**. You've obviously got a winner there! She has indeed achieved national recognition and great scholarly distinction. Her work in epidemiology is notable by its breadth, depth, soundness, originality and unflagging productivity. Her intelligence ranges widely over a series of issues but her research within each issue has a happy, logical progression from question to new question.

I can vouch for Dr Barret-Connor's standing in the community of epidemiologists, particularly in chronic disease where she has made such a tremendous contribution in a short decade. Despite my distance from San Diego I can also vouch for her teaching prowess from the high marks given her by students and faculty in the annual NIH-American Heart Association Tahoe Seminar in Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology in which I am involved with her.

I've also had occasion to criticize some of her articles submitted for publication. The criticism relates, in a way perhaps, to her effectiveness as a teacher, in seeing things in black and white, strongly positively and negatively. She is obviously capable of reviewing data, coming to

conclusions and taking a strong stand on issues. The criticism has been that her conclusions and interpretation of the data may on occasion be beyond the evidence of the data. On the other hand, in other circumstances, I've seen her perfectly comfortable intellectually in the face of clear uncertainty in the evidence.

Finally, I believe that in evaluations of careers, those closest to an academic are the ones most able (if not the most willing) to provide the clearest view of the person's contribution. Two younger, extremely bright and highly perceptive colleagues with whom she has collaborated would, in my view, be worthwhile canvassing. They are K-T Khaw at Cambridge University in England and Michael Criqui at your University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Henry Blackburn".

Henry Blackburn, MD
Professor and Director
Professor of Medicine

/tmw