

**NEWS**

## Force for Fitness

By Sherry Angel

**For more than six decades, Joe and Betty Weider created a fitness revolution through their magazines and health and fitness publishing empire. Betty carries on Joe's legacy with the establishment of the Betty and Joe Weider Cardiac Intensive Care Unit and continues to support heart disease research and education at Cedars-Sinai.**

In their 53 years of marriage, until Joe Weider's passing, he and Betty Weider changed the world, bringing weight training, nutrition and fitness into the mainstream.

Joe, the father of modern bodybuilding, popularized fitness and health awareness worldwide by publishing magazines such as *Muscle and Fitness*, *Shape*, and *Men's Fitness*. He brought Arnold Schwarzenegger to America, and mentored him and millions of others.

Betty, the "First Lady of Fitness," was founder and co-publisher of *Shape* magazine, the most popular magazine for women's fitness throughout the world, published in 37 languages. She also became a renowned fitness magazine columnist and has authored several books.

Betty caught Joe's eye two years before they met when she was a model

who graced the covers of his and many other magazines. Betty was ahead of her time, advocating weight training for women in the 1950s, when the practice was frowned upon due to fears of over-developed muscles.

Together, Betty and Joe promoted healthy living through publications that reached many millions of readers a month, inspiring and creating a new fitness lifestyle throughout the world.

Privately, however, Joe wrestled for years with a serious health issue that brought him to Cedars-Sinai for specialized care. Joe was born with a genetic heart defect. Over three decades, he developed a close relationship with his cardiologist, Bojan Cercek, MD, PhD, director of the Cedars-Sinai Coronary Care Unit, co-director of the Oppenheimer Atherosclerosis Research Center, and the Eleanor and Harold Foonberg Chair in Cardiac Intensive Care. Under Cercek's care, Joe remained active and fit well into his later years.

Despite his 13-year battle with congestive heart failure, he reached age 93, passing away in 2013. "I believe Dr. Cercek prolonged my husband's life by many years and, most importantly, the quality of his life," Betty says.

Cercek is also Betty's cardiologist, and she continues to see him for care that "considers all aspects of my health."

"He is so dedicated to his patients and to

his profession," she says. "He remembers my medical history with such detail. Sometimes, I feel as though I'm his only patient because of his caring attitude and genuine concern. Joe felt the same."

*Below: Betty and Joe Weider on their wedding day  
Right: Joe and Betty on their 35th wedding anniversary*

