
Susan M. Love, Chief Visionary Officer & "Founding Mother" of Breast Cancer Advocacy & Research Dies



Susan M. Love, MD, MBA, who led Dr. Susan Love Foundation for Breast Cancer Research since 1995, steering the Foundation through its innovative and life-changing research and advocacy programs, has died. She was 75.

Dr. Love passed away with recurrent leukemia on July 2, 2023 in Los Angeles, California.

A breast surgeon, Dr. Love is best known for pioneering work fueled by her criticism of the medical establishment's paternalistic treatment of women. She was an early advocate of cancer surgery that conserves as much breast tissue as possible. She also was among the first to sound the alarm on the risks of routine hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for menopausal women. In her personal life, she fought to expand the rights of same-sex couples as parents. In 1993, Dr. Love and Dr. Helen Cooksey made history by getting approval for the first joint adoption by a gay couple from the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, a state that did not recognize same-sex marriage at the time. This monumental case paved the way for Massachusetts to become the first state to legalize same-sex marriage a decade later.

After leaving the [Faulkner Hospital in Boston](#), Dr. Susan Love was recruited to set up what later became the [Revlon UCLA Breast Center](#) in 1992. A founder of the breast cancer advocacy movement in the early 1990's, she helped organize the [National Breast Cancer Coalition \(NBCC\)](#). She later served on the boards of the NBCC and the [Young Survival Coalition](#). In 1996, she retired from the active practice of surgery to dedicate her time to the urgent pursuit of finding the cause of breast cancer to achieve her goal of ending breast cancer in our lifetime.



In 1998, Love earned a business degree from the Executive MBA program at UCLA's Anderson School. She was appointed by President Clinton to the National Cancer Advisory Board, a position she held from 1998-2004.

[Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book](#), first published in 1990, and [to be released in its updated 7th edition this year](#) is considered the global "bible" for people with breast cancer by *The New York Times*. The book has been translated into German, Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, and Hebrew.

As Founder and Chief Visionary Officer of the Dr. Susan Love Foundation for Breast Cancer Research, Dr. Love built and oversaw an active research program centered on the cause and prevention of breast cancer. Last month, the *Journal Radiology* published results of a Dr. Susan Love Foundation NIH-sponsored study proving the efficacy of handheld ultrasound devices with AI to bring mammography to women in remote and under-resourced communities and countries.

The Love Research Army, which she launched in 2008, creatively accelerated cancer research by partnering volunteers and scientists for clinical trials and cancer research. The Army now has more than 390,000 supporters worldwide. For 13 years she convened the [International Symposium of the Human Breast](#), a meeting she established to bring together world-class researchers, clinicians, and advocates from multiple disciplines in an intimate think-tank environment to stimulate ideas, collaboration, and seed-funding opportunities for breast cancer research.



Susan Love was born in New Jersey and spent her adolescence first in Puerto Rico and then in Mexico, where she founded a science fair, earned awards for research projects, and was named valedictorian. After her second year of pre-med studies at Notre Dame of Maryland, she joined the School Sisters of Notre Dame who sent her to Fordham University in New York to continue her studies. In the 1970s, medical schools were still admitting few women, perhaps 10% of the class, but Love, who was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha and graduated cum laude, was among the five women who were the top graduates in the 1974 class of the State University of New York's Downstate Medical School. Dr. Love completed her surgical training at Boston's Beth Israel Hospital, and in 1988 was recruited to found the [Faulkner Breast Center at Faulkner Hospital](#), with comprehensive care that allowed patients to see teams composed of radiation therapists, oncologists and surgeons. She was recruited by the University of California, Los Angeles, to found what later became the [Revlon UCLA Breast Center](#), one of the first such comprehensive centers in Los Angeles.

Foundation CEO Christopher Clinton Conway said he and the Foundation, as well as millions worldwide, are "indebted to Dr. Love's vision, dedication, and commitment to ending breast cancer for all."

"The light that Susan shared with the world has touched so many, and the world will mourn her loss. As an advocate, a researcher, a doctor, a surgeon, a friend, an author, and so much more, her legacy will live on forever in the **love** she showed the world."

Dr. Love's fierce intellect, unrelenting tenacity, and laser-like focus inspired people globally.

Love is survived by her wife, Helen Cooksey, MD, and their daughter Katie Patton-LoveCooksey and her wife, Diana Patton-LoveCooksey. Service plans are pending.

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