

William Clifford Roberts, M.D., M.A.C.C.

Medical career[[edit](#)]

Postgraduate Training[[edit](#)]

After graduating from Emory, and despite his previous experiences in anatomy and surgery, Roberts served as an intern in medicine at Boston City Hospital before pursuing a 3-year residency in anatomic pathology at the [National Institutes of Health](#) in [Bethesda, Maryland](#). It was here, working with attending physicians such as Glenn Morrow and [Eugene Braunwald](#) that his career began to focus on cardiovascular pathology, and he focused his training exclusively on autopsies and surgical pathology. He also began reading the works of Jesse Edwards, which he credits with helping to develop both his style of writing and strong interests in medical authorship and publications. He next served as a resident on [the Osler Medical Service](#) at [The Johns Hopkins Hospital](#) in Baltimore before spending an additional year as a fellow in cardiovascular disease at the [National Institutes of Health](#). This extensive training conferred upon Roberts unique credentials both as an anatomic pathologist and a clinically trained cardiologist.

National Institutes of Health[[edit](#)]

From July, 1964 to March, 1993, Roberts served as the first head of the newly created pathology section at the [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#), a division of the [National Institutes of Health](#). Here, he continued to work with notable cardiac physicians including [Eugene Braunwald](#), Willis Hurst, and Glenn Morrow. Federal money for cardiovascular research, a national priority since the conclusion of World War II allowed for rapid expansion of the program. Roberts soon had 3 pathology fellows per year working with him, and he worked long hours alongside them - usually six nights per week.

The pathology section of the NHLBI was substantial but in Roberts' first year only 25 cardiac specimens were available for study. Determined to catalog the largest possible collection of anatomic cardiac pathology, Roberts personally canvassed more than a dozen institutions each month to collect heart specimens which he would examine and return with completed autopsy results to their parent institutions. Among those hospitals contributing to his collections were Georgetown, [George Washington University](#), [Children's National Medical Center](#) and [Johns Hopkins Hospital](#) as well as the Washington, D.C. Veteran's Affairs hospital and [National Naval Medical Center](#). Collectively, Roberts was soon studying more than 50 hearts per month, a twenty-fivefold increase over those available from the NIH alone.

Despite major achievements by the institution in the understanding of cardiovascular diseases, Roberts was frustrated by growing difficulties attracting pathologists interested in cardiovascular disease. These difficulties were compounded by the closure of the NIH cardiac surgery program in 1987, greatly limiting the quantity and diversity of pathology available for study.

Baylor University Medical Center[[edit](#)]

In March 1993, 32 years after starting at the NIH, Roberts left the National Institutes of Health to join the faculty of [Baylor University Medical Center](#), the flagship of a large hospital network located in the [Dallas/Fort Worth](#) metroplex. Working in a laboratory built for him by the hospital, he continues to

study cardiac pathology and has published more than 300 articles since.^[2] He is also an active participant in the ongoing training of cardiovascular disease and pathology fellows.

Individual Academic Contributions[\[edit\]](#)

Journal Articles[\[edit\]](#)

Roberts has published over 1600 articles to date, almost all of them in peer-reviewed publications.^[2] The majority of his original scientific publications focus on anatomic aspects of cardiovascular disease. In addition, Roberts has written or co-authored a number of articles discussing risk factors and risk-factor management in cardiovascular disease. As editor for both the *Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings* and *The American Journal of Cardiology*, Roberts has also published a number of editorials discussing current trends in cardiovascular medicine.

Books[\[edit\]](#)

Roberts has written or co-written 11 individual titles. In chronological order, these are:

1. *Classification of Heart Disease in Childhood* (1970, 70pp.)
2. *A Manual of Nomenclature and Coding of Cardiovascular Disease in Children: a Supplement to the Systematized Nomenclature of Pathology* (1970, 69pp.)
3. *Congenital Heart Disease in Adults* (1979, 574pp.)
4. *Facts and Ideas from Anywhere 2000*
5. *Facts and Ideas from Anywhere 2000–2006*
6. *Facts and Ideas from Anywhere 2011 to 2015*
7. *Collected Interviews of Baylor University Medical Center Physicians and Administrators Published in Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings* (1995-2015, 956pp.)
8. *Interviews: Published in The American Journal of Cardiology 1982-2015 Volume 1: A-K* (2016, 69pp.)
9. *Interviews: Published in The American Journal of Cardiology 1982-2015 Volume 1: L-Z* (2016, 584pp.)
10. *From-the-Editor Columns: Published in The American Journal of Cardiology 1982-2015* (2016, 632pp.)

Roberts was also editor of a series of books entitled *Cardiology* which were published in annual editions continuously from 1982-1999. Each of these books summarized the major achievements and discoveries in cardiology for their respective years.

Organizational Contributions to Medicine[\[edit\]](#)

American College of Cardiology[\[edit\]](#)

Roberts was actively involved in the leadership of the [American College of Cardiology](#) from 1971-1982 in the capacities listed below.

- 1971-1974 Film Review Committee for Annual Scientific Sessions (Chaired in 1974)
- 1971-1978 Annual Scientific Sessions Committee
- 1971-1978 Heart House Committee
- 1973-1978 Board of Trustees
- 1975-1978 Heart House Learning Center Curriculum Committee
- 1976-1978 Ad Hoc Committee on Goals and Objectives
- 1977-1982 Publications Committee (Chairman)
- 1977 Nominating Committee
- 1977-1980 Long-Range Planning Committee
- 1978-1981 Heart House Acquisitions Committee (Chairman)
- 1978-1982 Director of Congenital Heart Disease Course, Heart House of the American College of Cardiology

American Heart Association[\[edit\]](#)

Roberts has been actively involved in a number of activities for the [American Heart Association](#) including serving as a reviewer for their annual scientific sessions. He has also been a fellow of the Council of Clinical Cardiology since 1971 and, since July 1994 has been a member of the Dallas AHA affiliate's board of trustees.

Medical Journal/Publication Editorial Boards[\[edit\]](#)

Currently or previously, he has also served in editorial board capacities for the following publications (listed alphabetically):

1. American Heart Journal: July 1979 – December 1996
2. American Journal of Cardiology: January 1973 – June 1980, June 1982 – present
3. American Journal of Geriatric Cardiology: January 1999 – present
4. American Journal of Medicine: January 1975 – December 1986
5. American Journal of Medicine & Sports: January 1998 – present
6. Cardiac Chronicle: 1989 – present
7. Cardiology: July 1989 – present
8. Cardiology Today: Current News in Cardiovascular Disease: 1998 – present
9. Cardiovascular Diseases: Diagnosis and management: July 1978 – present
10. Cardiovascular Reviews and Reports: June 1980 – present

11. Cardiovascular Risk Factors: April 1988 – present
12. Chest: July 1979 – June 1984
13. Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Diseases: July 1980 – June 1984
14. Circulation: January 1973 – July 1978; July 1993 – present
15. Clinical Cardiology: January 1978 – present
16. Clinical Perspectives in Cardiology: July 1984 – present
17. Coronary Artery Disease Index & Reviews: January 1995 – present
18. Current Cardiology Reviews: July 2004 – present
19. Current Problems in Cardiology: January 1975 – June 1984
20. Geriatric Medicine Alert: May 1982 – December 1982
21. International Journal of Cardiology: July 1981 – December 1985
22. Journal of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation: April 1991 – present
23. Journal of Heart Disease: July 1999 – present
24. Journal of Heart Failure: January 1994 – present
25. Journal of the Louisiana State Medical Society April 2003—present
26. Journal of Vascular Medicine and Biology: July 1989 – present
27. Laboratory Investigation: January 1975 – May 1985
28. Lipids & Atherogenesis: September 1992 – present
29. Medical Month: October 1983 – March 1984
30. Medical Times: 1977–1990
31. MD TV Program Guide: January 1984 – present
32. Preventive Cardiology: January 1998 – present
33. Preventive Cardiovascular Medicine: September 1996 – present

Williamsburg Conference on Heart Disease[\[edit\]](#)

Each year since 1973, Roberts has served as chief administrator and host of an annual course in cardiology held in [Williamsburg, Virginia](#). Attendees are drawn from across the country and attend three days of sessions on varying current topics in cardiology, each led by a noted expert in the relevant field.

Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings[\[edit\]](#)

In April, 1994, Roberts was appointed as editor of the *Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings*, a peer-reviewed and [PubMed](#)-indexed periodical of primarily regional interest in Northwest Texas.

Roberts himself contributes a column to each issue entitled "Facts and Ideas from Anywhere", an homage to one of the guiding principles he ascribes to his colleague [Eugene Braunwald](#).

American Journal of Cardiology[\[edit\]](#)

Roberts was appointed to chair the publications committee of the [American College of Cardiology](#) (ACC) in 1976 by then-president Dean Mason, and continued to serve in this position for the next six years. In 1982, the publisher of the [American Journal of Cardiology](#) and the ACC, the organization which had founded it, parted ways. The ACC went on to form the Journal of the American College of Cardiology ("JACC") and took with it editor Simon Dack, leaving the AJC without an editor. Roberts was tapped to fill this position and readily accepted. He has held the editor-in-chief position continuously ever since.

Roberts has stated that his goals as editor-in-chief are to increase the "fun" of authorship and help encourage authors to contribute meaningful information to the sphere of cardiology while minimizing the political complexities he considers frequently associated with the process of academic publication. In addition, Roberts has published an extensive collection of more than 125 oral histories of prominent figures in the history and present of medicine, with a special focus on those contributing to the understanding and treatment of cardiovascular disease.