

Cherry Tabb

A Woman of Innovation

BY KATHLEEN DAVIES



Cherry Tabb and
Dr. Roberta Bondar

Cherry Tabb's biography is as remarkable for what it doesn't say as what it does. There's no mention of the imagination, devotion, expertise and drive behind her stellar career as a healthcare entrepreneur, or the caring generosity evident in her extracurricular activities. Personally and professionally, Cherry Tabb believes in being innovative in the hope of having a beneficial impact on individual lives.

Entrepreneurship

Using technology to good purpose is important on every level to Cherry. After obtaining her Masters Degree in Marriage and Family Counselling, she worked for two years in the field prior to pursuing her entrepreneurial inclinations. At the age of 29, Cherry developed and began managing a major health service company in North Virginia/Washington, D.C. For seven years, she recruited and employed a team of more than 80 physicians, nurses, support and varied healthcare personnel, building a ground-breaking organization that included outpatient practices, inpatient and hospital behavioural health services, plus a seminar business.

Cherry also designed, developed and managed a 32-bed Behavioural Health Services unit at North Virginia Doctor's Hospital. While in Washington, she played a major role as a catalyst and founding board member for Operation Friendship, providing counselling and support, including housing to cocaine addicts then living on D.C. streets.

In 1993, Cherry ventured into Canada to explore the emerging laser-vision correction field, when she spon-

sored herself in the entrepreneur class. In 1996, she co-founded the celebrated Herzig Eye Institute with her partner, Dr. Sheldon Herzig, where she is the CEO. Cherry has been a Canadian citizen since 2007.

Leader in Eye Surgery

Herzig is now considered one of the world's leading centres for advanced cataract and refractive surgery, which may be partly due to a company wide obsession with safety and procedural reliability in delivering High Definition Vision. This brings patients from around the globe to the clinic on Bloor Street in Toronto for innovative treatments such as MonoVision LASIK, NearVision CK, Refractive Lens Exchange, or an Implantable Collamer Lens.

The Herzig Eye Institute is also the first centre in North America to introduce LipiFlow, a new, advanced treatment system for patients who suffer from evaporative dry eye disease. In its Vitreoretinal Division, Herzig offers clients the most advanced retinal imaging and surgical technologies. It's the first in Canada to use the only micro-pulse laser on the market designed to minimize retinal damage, yet give therapeutic treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy.

Life-Changing Results

"Our belief in using the most advanced and proven technology," says Cherry, "has helped bring better vision to patients. Patients tell us we've delivered life changing improvements, and it's this quality of life aspect that's most

pleasing. Patients cite improvements in appearance, greater career opportunities, more self confidence, better performance in sports, and increased fitness. We not only like to stay at the forefront of change—we like to lead it."

This desire to effect real-life improvements means Cherry supports ORBIS, a humanitarian organization that recruits volunteer ophthalmologists to travel to remote areas in the developing world to do essential surgery, such as removing cataracts and restoring people's sight.

Leadership

Her drive for change was recognized when Cherry was awarded the 2007 RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur of the Year award for Innovation, and by Cherry's selection by the Israel Cancer Research Fund as one of the Women of Action for 2008. Clarity of vision is also key in Cherry's role on the board of Soulpepper Theatre Company, an artist-founded repertory company that combines classical theatre, mentorship and training to keep artists and their work at the centre of the organization.

"Applying the best resources available, and leading the way in innovation, is important to my business and any business. If I can use the same skills to help others, I'm all for it," says Cherry. ■