

Valerie P. Castle Opirari received her bachelor's degree in 1979 from McGill University in Montreal and her medical degree from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, in 1983, where she completed her pediatric residency in 1986. Castle also completed a fellowship in pediatric hematology/oncology at the U-M Medical School in 1990.

In 2003, Dr. Valerie Castle (Pediatric Hematology-Oncology) was appointed by Dean Allen Lichter as the Chair of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases. Dr. Castle had built a successful academic career studying the childhood cancer neuroblastoma. Preceding her appointment as Chair she served as the Department's Associate Chair for Research and the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs during Dr. Paul Courant's tenure as the Interim Vice President and Provost of the University under President Mary Sue Coleman. Dr. Castle is the first woman to be appointed in the University of Michigan Medical School as a Department Chair.

During Dr. Castle's tenure as Chair she was a member of the American Pediatric Society Council and elected to serve as President of the American Society of Academic Medical School Department Chairs (AMSPDC).

During this decade the faculty and staff continued their work to expand clinical service lines and basic, clinical and health services research programs. The Department under the leadership of the chair successfully increased its outreach to philanthropy greatly expanding the cohort of endowed chairs.

To encourage additional scholarly and research activity, community support for the work of the faculty and staff also led to named endowment funds in the Office of the Associate Chair for Education (T.G Brown Endowment in Education and Bruce Fund), named endowed lectureships distributed in the Divisions (MacDonald Dick Lectureship in Cardiology, the Aileen Sedman Lectureship in Medical Informatics, the David Rosen Lectureship in Adolescent Medicine); and junior scholar awards (Jeanette Ferrantino Young Investigator Award; the Jones Family Foundation Research Scholar Award; the Gorman Family Scholar Award; the Charles Woodson Research Awards) and the Charles Woodson Clinical Research Fund in the Office of the Associate Chair for Research that provides support for departmental research infrastructure, biostatistics support, the Charles Woodson Laboratory for clinical research specimen processing and 10 annual named intramural competitive research awards.