

Dr. Susan Ball attended Dartmouth College where she majored in Art History and received her MD from the Medical College of Pennsylvania. After residency in Internal Medicine at the Upstate Medical Center in New York, she attended Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health for an MPH. The AIDS epidemic was raging through the country at that time and hospitals across the country were increasingly overwhelmed by these sick and dying, mostly young patients for whom no effective treatment existed. In 1992 Dr. Ball began working at the Center for Special Studies, the AIDS care center at New York Presbyterian Hospital, Weill Cornell Medicine. She has spent her career as a clinical specialist in the care of patients with HIV. Adding to her interests, in 2009 Dr. Ball joined the inaugural class in the Masters of Science in Narrative Medicine program at Columbia University and completed the program in 2011. Dr. Ball's capstone project for the degree was the completion of a memoir entitled "Voices in the Band" which chronicles the arc of HIV/AIDS in the 1990s, as experienced by her patients, colleagues and herself, documenting that decade where an AIDS diagnosis transformed from being a virtual death sentence to being a chronic, controllable illness. Her book was published in 2015 and reviewed in the New York Times. In 2011 she became a partner and co-PI with Dr. Rita Charon on a NIH grant to support teaching Narrative Medicine in the medical schools at Columbia and Cornell. Dr. Ball has developed several courses and teaches Narrative Medicine to students at Weill Cornell Medicine. She runs monthly Narrative Medicine sessions at her HIV clinic for the staff and has, for the last six years, facilitated a monthly Narrative Medicine session for the Palliative Care team at New York Presbyterian Hospital. Her work has gained her numerous honors including several teaching awards, the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine award from the Arnold Gold Foundation and the Parker Small Humanitarian award from her class at Dartmouth College. Dr. Ball has worked to broaden the Humanities and Humanism focus at Weill Cornell Medicine, believing that narrative is the medium through which we communicate and that our ability to connect with our patients and ourselves can be enhanced through our understanding of the stories we tell and those we are told.