

FIRST PLACE

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A woman who inspires me in my life is Gerty Cori. She was named after a warship. She decided that she wanted to study science at 16 years old - the age she was when she graduated high school. Gerty was told that she couldn't study science though; she would need more background in Latin, math, physics and chemistry. But this did not deter Gerty. She learned a total of 23 years worth of the coursework needed in just 2 years.

Gerty Cori was one of the first women to be enrolled into the Charles Medical School, located in Prague. There, she received her PhD in medicine and met her husband, Carl Cori. She graduated in 1920. After graduating, she searched for a job. This was a time period where women were discriminated against. She wasn't employed on as good terms as men were. It took her until 1938 to be promoted to the same position as her husband, who was a research associate.

After World War I, Gerty was given vitamins for malnutrition but didn't consume them. Instead, she gave them to other patients. She felt that they needed them more than her. As a result of not taking the supplements, she developed xerophthalmia - a disease that is associated with vitamin deficiency. Even though she developed this, she continued on with her research.

Gerty and her husband worked together and discovered the Cori cycle - the process of how glucose is broken down by enzymes in the body, released in the form of energy. The research Gerty has done has helped thousands of pediatric diabetes patients. She also broke barriers for women. She broke another barrier for women - in 1947, she was the first American woman to win a Nobel Prize pertaining to scientific discipline. Additionally, she became a Professor of Biochemistry. That same year, Gerty Cori was diagnosed with myelosclerosis, a bone marrow disease, but didn't give up on her research. She passed away on October 26, 1957.

One of my favorite quotes by Gerty Cori is, "Honesty, which stands mostly for intellectual integrity, courage and kindness are still the virtues I admire, though with advancing years the emphasis has been slightly shifted and kindness seem more important to me than in my youth. The love for and dedication to one's work seem to me to be the basis of happiness." This quote is really important to me because the all of the values forementioned are the ones that I also hold close to me.

Why does Gerty Cori inspire me? For one thing, she and I have numerous things in common. She excelled in Latin and chemistry, and those are my best classes in school. Additionally, I want to study science when I graduate high school, similar to Gerty. I

want to earn my bachelors of science degree in the biology field, as well as master's degree, and possibly a doctorate in genetics counseling. Gerty was enrolled in Charles University Medical School, and I recently interned at UMass Medical School this summer. Gerty's research impacted children with diabetes; I did my internship in the Diabetes/Endocrine area of the hospital.

After researching Gerty Cori in depth, I have realized that she and I share the same interests. I am also taking a similar path that she has taken. Is that coincidental? I would like to think we took similar paths because our inspirations early in life determine who we are and what paths we choose to take later in life. One striking characteristic Gerty possessed that will always inspire me everyday is determination. If she could continue her research despite discrimination and her illnesses, then I can definitely achieve what I aspire to be and do in life. For these numerous reasons, Gerty Cori inspires me.