

# Kathryn Egloff Zoon

1948 –

Class of 1970

Immunologist;

Science Administrator



*“My life’s work and passion [has been] bringing to market medical discoveries that improve the quality of human life.”*

Kathryn Zoon '70

## Reputation

First female scientific director of the NIH National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Division of Intramural Research, one of the world’s premier immunology and infectious disease programs.

She became a leader in the regulation of biotechnology-derived products.

As head of the FDA Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER), Zoon presided over a decade of dramatic change in the world of biotech, cellular, and gene therapies. She helped forge CBER into the world’s premier biologic regulatory agency, the global leader in the development of vaccine, blood, and novel biological therapeutics.

The first woman to serve as director of an FDA center, she became an outspoken advocate for strong science, both in CBER and throughout the FDA.

## Professional Achievements

NIH fellow with Nobel Laureate Christian Anfinsen, researching human interferon, 1975-80.

In 1980, joined the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Bureau of Biologics as a research chemist.

Director, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) Division of Cytokine Biology, 1988-92.

Director, FDA Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER), 1992-2002.

Principal deputy director, NIH Center for Cancer Research, 2002-04.

Scientific director, Division of Intramural Research, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, 2006-2016. Named scientist emeritus, 2016.

Author of more than 130 scientific papers.

Known for her pioneering research on interferons.

## Service and Career Contributions

National Academy of Medicine (Institute of Medicine), 2002.

Associate editor, *Journal of Interferon Research*.

Federal liaison to the board of the International Association of Biologists.

Director, Emergent BioSolutions Inc., since 2016.

President, International Society for Interferon and Cytokine Research, 2000-01.

Vice president, Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences, 1999-2003.

Health and Human Services Award for Distinguished Service, 2001 and 2003.

RAA Fellows Award, 1997.

*BioPharm* Person of the Year Award, 1992.

Member, NIH Board of Scientific Directors, since 1992.

## Kathryn Zoon '70

Kathryn Egloff Zoon earned her bachelor's degree in chemistry from Rensselaer in 1970 and her Ph.D. in biochemistry from Johns Hopkins University in 1975.

She began her career in 1975 at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), when she initiated her studies on interferon in the Laboratory of Chemical Biology with Nobel Laureate Christian B. Anfinsen. In 1979-80 she and her colleagues were the first to report the complete purification and partial characterization, including the terminal amino acid sequence analysis, of a human interferon alpha. This discovery helped launch the biotechnology era, including the cloning and development of new cytokine products for clinical use.

Following her NIH fellowship, Zoon moved to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) to continue her research on interferon. She was the first to report the specific binding of human interferon alpha to a cell surface receptor. From 1992 to 2002, she served as CBER's director, overseeing the safety and enhancement of the nations' blood supply, vaccines, and biological therapeutics. During her tenure as director, CBER licensed approximately 320 biological products, including vaccines, and implemented the prescription drug user fee program for biological products.

From 2002 to 2004, she was principal deputy director of the Center for Cancer Research at the NIH National Cancer Institute.

In 2006, after serving two years as deputy director, Zoon became the first female scientific director of the NIH National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Division of Intramural Research, overseeing a staff of over 120 principal investigators who led research groups composed of scientists, physicians, fellows, technical personnel, and students. This included the Rocky Mountain Laboratories, a biosafety level 4 facility. She continued her research on human interferons as chief of NIAID's Cytokine Biology Section.

Zoon has served on the World Health Organization Expert Committee on Biological Standardization for nearly two decades, as well as the U.S. Department of Defense Malaria Vaccine Program Scientific Advisory Board, and the U.S. Agency for International Development Vaccine Development Scientific Consultants Group. She is a member of the Division on Earth and Life Studies Committee of the National Research Council, 2015-17, and she served as president of the International Society for Interferon and Cytokine Research, 2000-01.

Zoon has received numerous awards, including the 2014 William S. Hancock Award for outstanding achievements in CMC (chemistry, manufacturing & controls) regulatory science; the 2001 Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service for outstanding leadership in positioning FDA as an important contributor to the nation's capability to respond to bioterrorism and a 2003 HHS award for counter-bioterrorism; the 1994 Genetic Engineering News Award, for streamlining and improving the regulatory process for biologics and biotechnology products; and the first *Biopharm* "Person of the Year Award" in 1992, honoring accomplishments benefiting the North American biotechnology industry.