

Mellanie True Hills (Survivor, Heart Health Expert, Motivational Speaker, Patient Advocate, and Founder of StopAfib.org)



Mellanie True Hills is a heart disease survivor, heart health expert, and author of the multiple award-winning book, [A Woman's Guide to Saving Her Own Life: The HEART Program for Health & Longevity](#). After having a brush with death in emergency heart surgery, and a subsequent close call with a stroke due to an irregular heartbeat, atrial fibrillation (AF or afib), she pledged to leave behind her high-tech executive life to use her second chance to help others avoid heart disease and stroke, the #1 and #3 killers.

In the U.S. alone, heart disease and stroke take nearly 3,000 men and women each day. Forty per cent of us will get, and die from, heart disease or stroke. But this is preventable, if you know what to do. Mellanie's mission is to spread awareness of how to save your own life. She provides a message of hope and encouragement, sharing how to take control, decrease stress, and protect against heart disease and stroke. Audiences consistently say, **You saved my life.**

To further this mission, Mellanie founded the non-profit American Foundation for Women's Health and [StopAfib.org](#), a patient advocacy organization that provides information and support for men and women living with atrial fibrillation. She travels extensively, speaking out about heart disease, stroke, wellness, prevention, and patient advocacy, including at [American Heart Association Go Red for Women events](#), hospital atrial fibrillation and [women's health events](#), and corporate and association events.

Through StopAfib.org, the most visited heart arrhythmia site worldwide, Mellanie seeks to raise awareness of atrial fibrillation to decrease afib-related strokes and to improve quality of life for patients and their families by supporting and enhancing communication with their health care providers. The organization has partnered in [Facing AFib](#), featuring TV star **Susan Lucci**, and [AF Stat](#), featuring NBA Hall-of-Famer **Jerry West**, and has enlisted a Global Who's Who of atrial fibrillation and stroke experts to help with the cause.

Successes include creating Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month and lobbying with other organizations to gain U.S. Senate designation of September as National Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month. She has testified before the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), spoken at the conference of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) of the US Department of Health and Human Services, and brought the voice of the atrial fibrillation patient community to think tanks, such as the Institute for Clinical Effectiveness Research and the Center for Medical Technology Policy. StopAfib.org has also been active in health policy discussions and convened the Atrial Fibrillation National Policy Roundtable in Washington, DC. The organization has also partnered in awareness-raising coalitions in the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Latin America, and Mellanie is a co-author of the Action for Stroke Prevention coalition report, [How Can We Avoid a Stroke Crisis in the Asia-Pacific Region?](#)

Mellanie educates, inspires, and motivates audiences to make lasting changes in their lives to protect their health. She also guides patients and caregivers to become better health advocates and helps health-care providers understand what it is like to live with atrial fibrillation and how to better help their patients.

She is a regular contributor on patient perspectives to *EP (Electrophysiology) Lab Digest*, and has been featured by hundreds of media around the globe, including CNBC Asia, Reuters, *Newsweek*, PBS, Fox, ABC, NBC, and CBS. Her story and mission have been featured in *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Heart-Healthy Living*, *More*, *Success*, and *USA Weekend*. She

also authored a chapter in the highly-acclaimed book, *Sixty Things to Do When You Turn Sixty* (Sellers Publishing).

Internet Pioneer and e-Business Strategist

Always an agent of innovation, transformation and change, Mellanie was previously an Internet pioneer at J.C. Penney Company, Inc., in the early 1990s, where she led the creation of one of the earliest corporate web sites, JCPenney.com, as well as an intranet and supplier extranet.

At Dell Inc., she was the executive in charge of creating and executing Dell's intranet vision and strategy. At Cisco Systems, Inc., she was an e-Business Strategy Thought Leader in Cisco's Global High-Tech Internet Business Solutions Practice, where she served as a Trusted Advisor to top executives of some of Cisco's largest high tech customers.

As a renowned Internet visionary, she is the author of two intranet and groupware best-sellers, [Intranet Business Strategies](#) and [Intranet as Groupware](#), published by John Wiley & Sons. She wrote for numerous business and technology publications, including a regular column for the Dallas Business Journal that was syndicated in other city business journals.

She addressed audiences of hundreds and thousands at some of the earliest Internet events, in locations as diverse as Montreal, Singapore, Rio de Janeiro, Johannesburg, and New Delhi, and has keynoted adjacent to such Internet luminaries as Tim Berners-Lee, creator of the World Wide Web. She was also a celebrity judge at the First India Internet Awards, in New Delhi, India.

Personal

In addition to being a wife and mother, Mellanie has served as a committed American Heart Association advocate and volunteer, including as a board member, speaker, and media spokesperson, and has lobbied Congress and the Texas state legislature for funding to raise awareness of women and heart disease. AHA executives call her "a true Transformational Leader", and the South Central Affiliate honored her with the Outstanding Advocate Award. She also serves on the Advisory Committee of the Patient-Centered Cognitive Support program managed by the National Center for Cognitive Informatics and Decision Making in Healthcare (NCCD) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Mellanie is a graduate of Leadership Texas and served four years on the Executive Committee of the Leadership Texas Alumnae Association Board of Directors. She is a member of the National Speakers Association (NSA), the Global Speakers Federation, and Mended Hearts. In 2007, she was a finalist for the Women's Chamber of Commerce of Texas and Texas Governor's Commission for Women *Blazing Star Award*.