MEDICINE’S MICHELANGELO:
The Life & Art of Frank H. Netter, MD
By Francine Mary Netter

“The book illustrates why the medical community almost universally held Netter in high esteem...The author has brought her creative, extremely hard-working father to life.”
— Publishers Weekly

Frank Netter was both a doctor and artist whose genius was such that he not only grasped the most complex medical concepts, but he could make drawings that made those concepts clear to others. Beginning in the mid 20th century, his books of illustrations — thirteen atlases and over 200 pamphlets — educated doctors and health care professionals the world over. His award-winning Atlas of Human Anatomy is today the most popular and best selling anatomy atlas in the English language.

Medicine’s Michelangelo, written by his daughter Francine Mary Netter (October, 2013; $39.95; Quinnipiac University Press), is the first biography of this illustrious figure revered by generations of students of medicine.

Netter was the son of working class immigrants who owned a stationery store in the theater district of New York. In his youth, all he ever wanted to do was to paint, yet he entered medical school at the urging of his mother. He finished an internship in medicine and surgery at Bellevue Hospital, but found that there was more demand for his sable brush than for his scalpel, and for the next fifty years devoted himself full time to making medical illustrations.

Netter moved in both the glamorous New York art world and intellectual medical circles. He lived in opulent homes on Long Island and in Palm Beach, lunched at the Society of Illustrators with the likes of Norman Rockwell and Rube Goldberg, and at the great teaching hospitals consulted with hundreds of medical experts, including Drs. Michael DeBakey, C. Everett Koop, Albert Sabin and Paul Dudley White, and single-handedly documented the great medical advances of the 20th century.

Francine Mary Netter captures the character of the man and tells his life story using not only her remembrances but also her father’s own autobiographical notes, personal correspondence and private files, publications of his work and public archives, and more than 100 interviews with family members, artists, distinguished practitioners and scientists. More than an account of his momentous career, Medicine’s Michelangelo provides a personal introduction to the man behind the art.

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