

Obituaries

Alain Choussat, 1937–2003

ON JULY 12, 2003, ALAIN CHOUSSAT PASSED away after a long and painful disease. Alain was born in Algeria in 1937, where his father was professor of medicine at the university of Algiers, and his mother was a primary care physician. He served his internship in Algiers in 1960, but then had to leave his native country, starting a new life in France in 1962. He worked hard as an intern in Paris, and then became a successful cardiologist for both adults and children at the University of Bordeaux, where he worked extensively with Francis Fontan and Eugene Baudet. His most famous contribution was, perhaps, the establishment of the “Ten Commandments” for the treatment of tricuspid atresia. He had participated extensively in promoting the concept of the Fontan procedure, carrying out the hemodynamic and angiographic explorations himself, and working out the indications for the operation as set out in the “Commandments”.

Since 1978, he had been a very active chief of Paediatric Cardiology in Bordeaux, and was the President of the paediatric group within the French Society of Cardiology. He was also very active within the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology, first as a member and councillor before becoming Scientific Secretary from 1987 to 1992. He was the first President elect of our association, serving from 1992 to 1995. He organized our annual meeting in Bordeaux in 1982, which remains in the memory of all those who attended because of the famous dinner in Cos d'Estournel, supported by the very best wines of Bordeaux, and a splendid post-congress tour in St Emilion.

Everybody loved him. His kindness, humanity, and sense of humour, as well as his professional skills, were appreciated by his patients just as much as by



his fellows and colleagues. He fought bravely a severe haematological disease, passing through a period of painful treatment with extraordinary courage to achieve 9 months of remission, during which he returned full time to his department of Paediatric Cardiology to support his young colleagues, Maria Jimenez and Tambo.

Christian Rey and I attended his funeral. The church was full of old patients and colleagues.

On behalf of the European Association, we passed on our condolences on their loss to his wife Nicole, and to his four sons Philippe, Pierre, Guillaume and Olivier.

Alain, we all miss you.

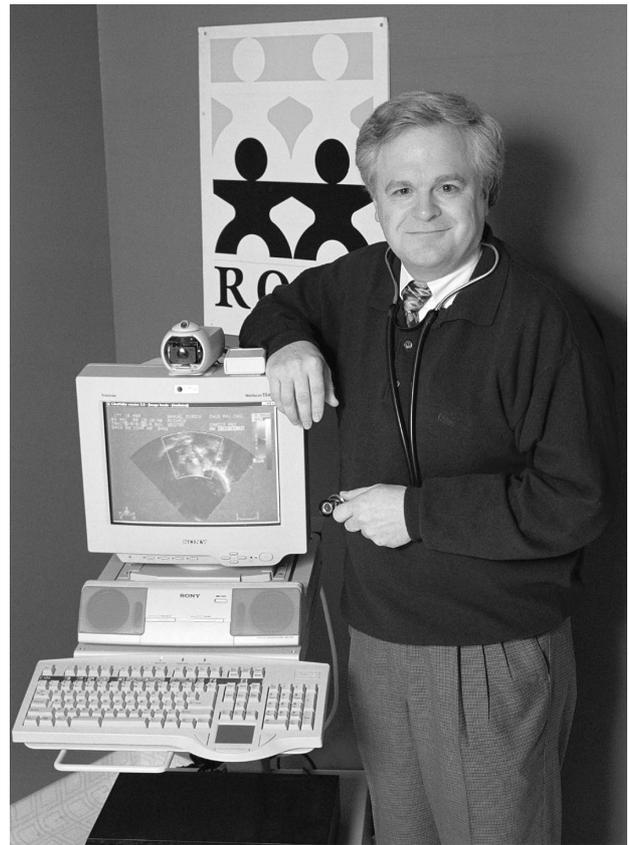
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Alain Cloutier, 1955–2004

ON MAY 11TH, 2004, THE CANADIAN paediatric cardiology community lost a trusted and dynamic leader, Dr. Alain Cloutier. Dr. Cloutier died at the tragically young age of 49 years, having been diagnosed with an invasive brain tumour. Born in Quebec City, Canada, in 1955, he trained in paediatric cardiology at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children. He subsequently returned to Quebec City, where he joined the Division of Paediatric Cardiology, and went on to become its head in 1997. At the age of 47, he was appointed Chair of the Department of Paediatrics of the University of Laval in Quebec. In 2000, he was appointed President of the Canadian Paediatric Cardiology Association and, in 2002, he organized and led a Canadian Paediatric Cardiology Task Force to examine and optimise the delivery of paediatric cardiac services across Canada.

Alain was known in Canada as a “rassembleur”, someone able to generate enthusiasm among disparate groups to help achieve a common goal, most often that of improving the care given to children with congenital cardiac disease. His great love of children, and his reputation for fairness and honesty, leavened by his renowned sense of humour, facilitated his success in a number of ambitious projects. Perhaps the most notable, and certainly dearest to him, was the founding of the *Réseau québécois de télésanté de l'enfant*, or the Quebec Child Telehealth Network, described in detail in this issue of *Cardiology in the Young*. Alain's drive to promote telemedicine stemmed from personal experiences that convinced him of the importance of ready access to paediatric cardiologic specialists for all children, including those living in remote locations. Never did he let the technological aspects of the Quebec telehealth project overshadow the true benefits of being able to establish a cardiac diagnosis from distances as far away as 1500 kilometres. His enthusiasm was infectious, both among colleagues and among those government officials who were called upon to fund the province-wide telehealth project. It extended beyond Canada and Europe, where he set up collaborative telehealth projects, to the United States of America, Algeria, and South America, where he was invited to make presentations about telehealth.

At its inception, Alain founded the Quebec Child Telehealth Network as a clinical tool for paediatric cardiologists. Once established, however, the network has developed ever-increasing clinical applications throughout the province, including those in psychiatry, genetics, ophthalmology, and nephrology. In addition, Dr. Cloutier encouraged the development of



Quebec telehealth projects related to continuing medical education and multi-institutional research. Under his guidance, these complemented the clinical activities of the network with the extra dimensions of teaching and research.

Alain's contributions were recognized in Canada by several prestigious awards, including that of the Quebec Medical Association for Innovation and Leadership. Although he never sought them, he would doubtless have earned many more were he to have lived to accomplish all the projects he had started. His patients, their families, his colleagues, family and friends, all greatly mourn his premature passing. Alain, we hope that we will find the energy and dedication to further your endeavours and realize all your dreams. *Salut Alain, merci pour tout!*

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János Kamarás, 1916–2003

THERE ARE SAD MOMENTS IN OUR LIFE, WHICH cause us to refrain, for a minute or so, from our daily tasks. This happened to us when our beloved Teacher passed away, one who had always been a supportive boss, a stimulating man, and one on whom we could always rely.

With his loss, a charismatic person passed away who was known all over Europe. He had graduated as a medical doctor in 1941, becoming a paediatrician in 1946 after surviving the ravages of the Second World War.

He started his academic career at the First Paediatric Clinic of the Semmelweis University in Budapest. Later, in 1964, he continued his work in one of the largest paediatric hospitals in Budapest, after which, in 1967, he became one of the founding members of the Hungarian Institute of Cardiology. He worked there as a head of the Department of Paediatric Cardiology until 1984, the date of his retirement.

All the goals he targeted were completely achieved. He was the one who organized a network for paediatric cardiology in Hungary, which has proven remarkably effective in the recognition of children with congenital cardiac disease. He organized the timely transport of those thus diagnosed to the centre, where the potential for treatment was realised. This network is still operational, and is undoubtedly one of the most efficient in Europe. He was always the first to apply any new paediatric cardiological technique in our country. His efforts resulted in the establishment of a professional group of specialists, who were, and still are, friends.

He became a member of the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology in 1967, 4 years after it had been founded. He served on the Council, and became an Honorary Member. He belonged to the “big” generation. He organized the Annual General Meeting held in Budapest in 1978 with great success. All his friends from all over the world participated, and thus he was able to bring them to Hungary without regard to political considerations, at a time when this was not as easy as it is today.



He always shared his knowledge with his colleagues, searching out the possibilities for postgraduate training all over Europe. In his last years, he suffered from an incurable illness, but nobody ever heard any complaints. He had the physical strength and moral power to cope with his situation. His loss is especially painful for those who were lucky enough to enjoy not only his spirituality, but also his fantastic personality.

His whole life should be an example for all who are involved in paediatric cardiology today.

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Michael Schlemmer, 1948–2004

IN MARCH 2004, MICHAEL SCHLEMMER, PROFESSOR of Paediatrics at the University of Vienna, died tragically young at the age of 56, having suffered from a malignant tumour. Michael graduated as a medical doctor in Vienna in 1975, and began his academic career at the Department of Paediatrics. Shortly thereafter, he became a co-worker of Maria Wimmer, who was the leading paediatric cardiologist in Vienna at that time. After having been trained in paediatric cardiac catheterization by Jürgen Apitz in Tübingen, he started his work in the catheterization laboratory in Vienna in 1976, and it was he who shaped this specialty during his many years of service.

He received his degree as a Specialist in Paediatrics in 1980, and became Senior Lecturer in 1987, after having defended his thesis on the patterns of weight and growth in the pre- and postoperative periods of children with congenital cardiac disease.

In 2000, he became the acting chief of the Division of Paediatric Cardiology, but all too soon, in September, 2002, he had to resign from this post due to his severe illness. After that, he was appointed as Director of the Division of Teaching in Paediatrics, and put his emphasis on the education and training of his students until he died.

Michael Schlemmer was a dedicated paediatrician, and an outstanding paediatric cardiologist. He was also involved in many charitable activities, including our project in Bosnia, which aims at setting up a programme for paediatric cardiology and cardiac surgery in Sarajevo.

He was loved by patients, colleagues, and students alike.



Michael Schlemmer is survived by his wife, his 14-year-old daughter, and two sons. All of us who had the good fortune of knowing him will remember him with admiration and fondness.

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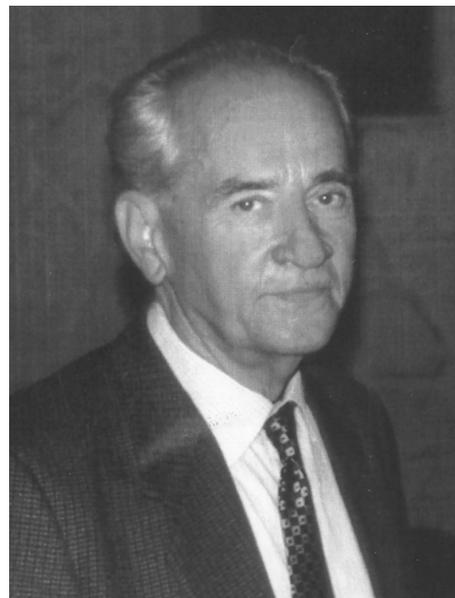
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Béla Záborszky, 1927–2002

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE BORN TO BE doctors, and there are even some who are born to be paediatric cardiologists. We were lucky to know such a man. He was called Béla Záborszky. He graduated as a medical doctor in 1951, at the Semmelweis University of Budapest. He became a paediatrician in 1955, and from 1957 on he worked as a paediatric cardiologist in the newly founded Hungarian Institute of Cardiology in Budapest. He was one among the very first who organized the transport and treatment of children with cardiac disease in Hungary. He authored the first publications in Hungary, dealing with all the topics that were up-to-date at that time. These publications became the basics in the development of Hungarian paediatric cardiology. Over this same time, he wrote his thesis on the heterotaxy syndromes.

He was always an enthusiastic teacher, enjoying the opportunity to share his huge clinical experience and knowledge with the younger generation. With János Kamarás, he made huge efforts to organize the “paediatric cardiology network” in Hungary. Despite suffering a serious illness after his retirement, he continued to work until his death.

We are all grateful to him, not only because he taught us paediatric cardiology for many years, but also because he was able to talk about other things, such as art, music, literature, and history. Because of this, he was also able to help us to become more human.



We are all proud that he belonged to us for such a long period of time. We all believe that it is only his body that has left us. His soul remains with us forever.

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