

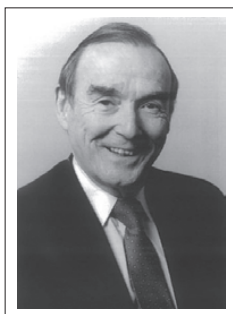
Dr. Elliot Rapaport: A true legend

Dr. Elliot Rapaport, the world-renowned cardiologist, died in September 2010 in San Francisco, California at the age of 86.

A native of California and a graduate of the University of California School of Medicine (UCSF) in San Francisco, he lived in the city and worked at the University for most of his life. At first, he worked at the UC Medical Center in the city, then started a new cardiology service at the SF General Hospital in 1960, developing it from the ground up into one of the best known cardiology centers in the United States. He remained affiliated with UC and from 1966 onwards carried the rank of Professor of Medicine. His important work on human hemodynamics, on valvular heart disease, on left ventricular volume measurements by thermodilution method and his many other contributions became textbook-referenced classics.

I knew Elliot Rapaport from the early 1960s, at the time of my fellowship at the Cardiovascular Research Institute of UCSF, under Julius H. Comroe, whom Elliot once described as one of his “mentors” (the other being Louis Dexter). Comroe, certainly a mentor to me as well, decided at that time that the two of us should co-operate in conducting my research project about chemoreceptor effects on pulmonary circulation. The year we spent together on this research project made us not only colleagues but friends as well, and led to further mutual research projects in San Francisco in later years.

I, as did everybody else surrounding him, learned to appreciate his thorough knowledge of cardiology, his honest approach to science and his unquestioned integrity. None of these qualities detracted in the slightest from his humane spirit, his



warm personality and his sincere relations with all those working with him.

Elliot continued to be acclaimed for his excellence in clinical cardiology and his teaching qualities in academic medicine, reaching a high point with his appointment as Editor-in-Chief of *Circulation* (1978–1983). He became also a leader in the professional life of American

cardiology, culminating in his election as President of the American Heart Association (1974–1975). His international recognition also rose: he was invited to lecture at numerous congresses all over the world and his contributions were recognized when in 1995 he was elected President of the World Heart Federation. I remember his visit in 1997 to Jerusalem when we hosted him here at the International Pharmacotherapy Congress and he delivered an outstanding Neufeld Memorial Lecture.

Elliot, besides his intensive activities in cardiology, found time to relax by watching his favorite ‘49ers’, by playing the violin and by listening to classical music on the radio, although he confessed in a 2009 interview that he “also likes jazz”.

Vivian, his loving wife of 68 years, was at his bedside, together with their three children, when Elliot, after a two year battle with cancer, died peacefully.

We, who were his peers, colleagues and students, will remember Elliot Rapaport not only as a brilliant clinical cardiologist and successful and prolific investigator of international fame, but also as the finest human being and impeccable character, a man who the San Francisco Chronicle in his eulogy described as “a legend of cardiology”. A legend he was already in his life, and remains so for all of us.

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