

# Mark E. Josephson, MD

(1943–2017)

**D**r. Mark Josephson, a pioneer in cardiac electrophysiology and catheter-based treatments of cardiac arrhythmias, died on 11 January 2017 after a prolonged battle with cancer. At the time of his death, he was Chief Emeritus of the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Herman Dana Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts.

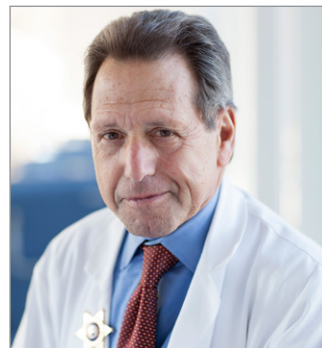
Mark was born in New York City in 1943. He graduated from Trinity College and subsequently from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. His training in internal medicine was at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, and in cardiovascular medicine it was at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia. He spent two years at the Staten Island Public Health Service Hospital, an important training ground for physicians interested in electrophysiology. He joined the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, where he quickly became recognized as an innovator in catheter-based treatment of cardiovascular arrhythmias and as a visionary clinical scientist. He rose to the rank of Professor and Director of the Harvard Thorndike Arrhythmia Institute and, in 2001, became Chief of Cardiovascular Medicine at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

Mark and his colleagues were among the first to identify the pathogenesis of ventricular arrhythmias associated with heart attacks; they then developed methods for mapping cardiac arrhythmias that provided electrophysiologists with the tools to ablate arrhythmias with a catheter, and sometimes by surgical techniques. Indeed, the ability to treat cardiac arrhythmias by catheter has been one of the major advances in cardiovascular medicine of the past four-plus decades. Dr. Josephson was the sole author of the major electrophysiology textbook titled *Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology*, a very unusual occurrence in the writing of medical textbooks.

Mark Josephson was a passionate educator who trained many of today's national and international leaders of cardiovascular electrophysiology. He was a creative physician–scientist, intellectually gifted, one who challenged existing doctrines and was usually correct in his predictions; and he was a physician–educator who cared deeply for his students and patients. Early in his career, he endured many criticisms of his pioneering efforts, almost always with a smile and a shrug of his shoulders. “They will see.”

He was preceded in death by his wife of 48 years, Ellen Eisenberg Josephson. He was a devoted father to two daughters and grandfather to three children, who called him “Poppi.”

Mark Josephson's contributions to cardiovascular electrophysiology are enormous and will continue to help large numbers of patients worldwide.



Mark E. Josephson, MD

(Courtesy of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston)

*James T. Willerson, MD,  
President Emeritus, Texas Heart Institute; and  
Editor-in-Chief, Texas Heart Institute Journal,  
Houston*