

In Memoriam:

## Louis L. Leatherman, Jr., MD (1937–2022)

Patrick J. Cook, MD

Medical Clinic of Houston

Louis Levy Leatherman, Jr., MD, died peacefully on 11 January 2022. Born on 17 April 1937, he was the eldest son of Gertrude Leatherman and Louis Levy Leatherman, Sr. His desire to become a physician was motivated by his father's death of heart disease when Louis Jr. was 16 years old.

Dr. Leatherman studied at Louisiana College, then earned his medical degree from Louisiana State University Medical School in 1962. His internship was at Martin Army Community Hospital in Fort Benning, Georgia (1962–1963), and his internal medicine residency at Confederate Memorial Medical Center in Shreveport, Louisiana (1965–1967).

He moved to Houston in 1968 for his cardiology fellowship, sponsored by Baylor College of Medicine (BCM). During his training at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital (SLEH) and the Texas Heart Institute (THI), he grew to appreciate his colleagues' aggressive management of heart and vascular disease. Their varied approaches to diseases and problems taught him to think flexibly when he evaluated his own patients. He participated in SLEH's first heart transplant program and considered it "fantastically exciting."

Cardiologists were also seeking alternatives to open heart surgery for treating blockages in coronary arteries. In the late 1970s, a new technique, percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA), enabled special catheters to be threaded into coronary arteries and inflated to reopen blocked blood vessels. Dr. Leatherman, along with Dr. Paolo Angelini, brought PTCA to THI after studying under Dr. Andreas Gruentzig. In 1979, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute chose THI as a test site, and, by April 1980, THI physicians had performed 100 PTCA procedures.

Dr. Leatherman established a private practice at the Medical Clinic of Houston while also serving as attending physician at SLEH and THI, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at BCM, consulting staff member at Texas Children's Hospital, and teaching staff member at Ben Taub General Hospital and Jefferson Davis Hospital. He retired in 1995 after a 30-year career.

In 1972, Dr. Leatherman purchased a ranch near Bertram, Texas, where he and his family enjoyed escaping the rigors of his medical practice. He loved nature and wildlife. In 1994, he married Mary Gail Swift, and when he retired, they moved to the ranch permanently. The couple traveled monthly to Ruston, Louisiana, to help run a corporate wellness clinic for a good friend.

Dr. Leatherman was preceded in death by his parents and by his first wife and mother of his children, Charlotte Wheeler Leatherman. He is survived by his wife



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Mary Gail Leatherman; daughter Dr. Martha Leatherman (and husband Dr. James Moore); son Mark Leatherman (and wife Peggy); brothers Dr. Edward H. and Malcolm L. Leatherman; grandchildren Jameson, Jonathan, and Rachel Moore, and Ashley and Hunter Leatherman; stepchildren Curt Swift and Shelly Swift Roeder; and step-grandchildren Jackson and Mia Swift, and Levon and Iva Mae Roeder.

Dr. Leatherman, a pioneer in advancing the treatment of heart disease, was deeply committed to his patients. They, along with his colleagues and family, will cherish his memory and contributions.

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