

## Correspondence

# Remembering Paolo Angelini, MD

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### *To the Editor:*

Our esteemed colleague and friend, Dr Paolo Angelini, died on July 29, 2023, at his home in Houston, Texas.<sup>1</sup> Born in Turin, Italy, on September 1, 1941, he graduated magna cum laude from the University of Milan in 1966. He then completed a medicine residency at the National Institute of Cardiology in Mexico City, Mexico, under the direction of the renowned cardiologist Dr Ignacio Chavez. Without question, Dr Maria Victoria de la Cruz, a preeminent cardiac embryologist, was 1 of his most influential teachers. After visiting Houston, Dr Angelini became interested in the adult and pediatric cardiology training program at The Texas Heart Institute and started a fellowship in 1972. He subsequently joined Drs Robert Leachman and Roberto Lufschanowski in helping build the clinical cardiology practice of Leachman Cardiology Associates at The Texas Heart Institute. He settled in Houston, where he met Surpik, his lifelong partner, with whom he raised 2 sons, Alessandro and Giorgio.

Over the next 50 years, Dr Angelini practiced at St Luke's Episcopal Hospital, leading a long and illustrious career. He achieved national and international recognition as a master angiographer and as an expert on the diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery anomalies, writing books on both topics. A prolific writer and a consummate scholar, he wrote more than 250 manuscripts that have been cited more than 1,300 times. As a scientist and inventor, Dr Angelini partnered with medical device engineer Dr Bandula Wijay in developing balloon catheters and a hemoperfusion system, which is on display at The Texas Heart Institute.

He was a tireless worker, usually the first to arrive and the last to leave our office, and he dedicated time apart from his extremely busy clinical practice to the numerous research projects that held his interest. Dr Angelini sought to shed light on conditions that were rare but had a significant impact on patients' lives. By many measures, he was a genius and an unconventional human being. There was no form of heart disease or other illness that did not get a second look from him or another treatment.

His passions included coronary anomalies, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, Takotsubo cardiomyopathy, and sudden cardiac death in athletes. As the leading cardiologist in the diagnosis and treatment of congenital anomalies and as director of the Center for Coronary Artery Anomalies at The Texas Heart Institute, he was working to establish a new standard of screening protocols for magnetic resonance imaging in high school athletes to clarify the incidence and cause of sudden death. For his many contributions to the field of cardiology, Dr Angelini received the title of Knight of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic and was awarded the Order of Andres Bello from Venezuela.

As a clinician, his prowess in the cardiac catheterization laboratory helped to improve the lives of countless patients from all over the world, earning their trust and that of generations of family members who traveled to Houston for his counsel. As a teacher, Dr Angelini spent innumerable hours after a busy day in the catheterization laboratory reviewing films with cardiology fellows. He had a palpable enthusiasm and thirst for learning and sharing his knowledge and cases with others.

Dr Angelini is survived by his wife Surpik and children Alessandro and Giorgio. His beloved grandchildren Luciano, Lorenzo, Xavier, and Perla were his pride and joy, and he shared with us their milestones, which were a source of immense pride.

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The world lost a truly inventive and passionate mind. Dr Angelini was an original, a force of nature, and he will be sorely missed by his colleagues, trainees, and patients from all over the world.

May he rest in peace.

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## References

1. Gräni C, Mery CM, Molossi S. In memoriam: Paolo Angelini (1941-2023)—a pioneer and world-leading expert in coronary artery anomalies. A tribute from the International Coronary Artery Anomalies Collaborative (ICAAC). *Tex Heart Inst J*. 2023;50(5):238311. doi:10.14503/THIJ-23-8311