

Obituary – Richard Heuser

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We are sorry to announce the death of one of our valued editorial board members, Dr Richard Heuser (November 17, 1950–May 23, 2024). Richard R Heuser, MD, FACC, FACP, FESC, MSCAI, was an internationally recognized cardiologist, inventor, educator and author, and was a diplomat of the American Board of Cardiovascular Diseases and the American Board of Interventional Cardiovascular Diseases. He was one of the early pioneers of coronary and peripheral angioplasty and was considered one of America’s top cardiologists.

Dr Heuser was born in Milwaukee, WI and attended the University of Wisconsin and Johns Hopkins University. He was Professor of Medicine at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, as well as past Director of the Interventional Fellowship Program at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, Phoenix Campus.

With 24 patents granted for different catheters stents and other medical devices, Dr Heuser served as a principal investigator to research the safety and/or effectiveness of more than 100 medical devices and 50 pharmaceutical products and participated in more than 100 research studies. He authored numerous articles, textbooks and medical manuscripts, and was frequently invited to international medical conferences to present findings of research originating in Phoenix.

Dr Heuser developed the first catheter treatment for leakage of the mitral valve, which has presaged the catheter treatment that is now available routinely for narrowing or leakage of the mitral valve. His hydrophilic or “water loving” wire, co-developed with an engineer, is utilized in approximately 20% in all angioplasty procedures performed worldwide. The covered stent that Dr Heuser co-invented is currently used in every catheter lab worldwide that performs angioplasty and stenting.

Frequently listed as a “Top Doc” in national publications, he had the honor of previously being named as Top Cardiologist in the Columbia HCA System, the largest hospital system worldwide in 1999. Dr Heuser was the former President of the Arizona Chapter of the American Heart Association and served on their Board.

Dr Heuser was named 2010 Health Care Hero by the Phoenix Business Journal in Arizona. He was awarded the Top Innovation award for his technology at the 2016 Cardiovascular Research Technologies (CRT) meeting. He was also named Physician of the Year at the 2016 Arizona Business Magazine Healthcare Leadership Awards. He recently was also honored to participate in the 40th Anniversary of Angioplasty in Zurich, Switzerland.

Rich was a devoted husband to Shari, father to Alexandra, adored grandfather to Ryker, Niko and late granddaughter, Anastasia. He was a beloved brother of Dinny Cosyns, Peter and Nancy Heuser. To those of you who knew him, worked with him, were treated by him, or attended any of his lectures, you knew him to be extremely passionate about his work, intelligent, attentive, funny as heck, sometimes irreverently. But many of us would say his most defining characteristic was his good humor and devotion to his family, especially to his beautiful wife, Shari. □