ON THE BEAT

Obituaries

Dr. William Ganz, coinventer of a revolutionary pulmonary artery catheter, died Nov. 10. He was 90 years old. A Nazi labor camp survivor, Dr. Ganz died of natural causes.

In the late 1960s, while a research scientist and staff physician at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, Dr. Ganz developed the catheter with his colleague, the late Dr. Jeremy Swan, who was chief of the medical center's cardiology division, to assess heart function in critically ill patients. In 1971, Dr. Ganz developed a new method for direct measurement of blood flow in humans, and this technique was incorporated into the Swan-Ganz catheter.

DR. WILLIAM GANZ

The measurement procedure, known as thermodilution, gauges the temperature difference of blood from one heart chamber to the next.

Used by more than 30 million patients since then, the balloon-tipped Swan-Ganz catheter is now standard treatment in cardiac medicine.

Inserted through a neck vein, shoulder, or groin, the device's balloon tip allows it to travel in the bloodstream. Once in place in the pulmonary artery, the catheter measures post MI effects and medication response. The device also measures cardiovascular performance of patients during heart surgery.

Born in 1919 in Kosice, Slovakia, Dr. Ganz started his medical training at Charles University in Prague. During the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Ganz was taken prisoner in a labor camp, but was later released and went into hiding in Budapest.

Dr. Ganz returned to Prague after World War II, completed his medical education, and specialized in cardiology. He began to develop his thermodilution method, but in 1966, he and his family emigrated to the United States to escape Communism. He was hired by Dr. Swan at Cedars-Sinai.

In 1982, Dr. Ganz joined forces with Dr. Prediman K. Shaw, the current director of the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute's cardiology division, to conduct studies of clot-dissolving therapy for myocardial infarction patients. Cedars-Sinai became the first medical center in the United States to test the therapy in humans.

The American College of Cardiology recognized Dr. Ganz with its distinguished scientist award in 1992.

Dr. Ganz was predeceased by his wife, Magda, in 2005. He is survived by his sons Tomas and Peter, and five grandchildren.

Dr. Donald S. Baim, an interventional cardiologist known for his work in the development of catheters and stents, died Nov. 6. He was 60 years old. His death was caused by complications of surgery for adrenal cancer.

Dr. Baim, a resident of Westwood, Mass., was chief medical and scientific officer for Boston Scientific in Natick, Mass. He had joined the company, which manufactures pacemakers, defibrillators, and other implants, in the summer of 2006.

DR. DONALD S. BAIM

"He was a pioneer in the development of interventional cardiology, and the many contributions he made to science, medicine, and medical technology will serve as a proud and enduring legacy," Ray Elliott,

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Boston Scientific's president and CEO, said in a statement.

Born in New York and raised in Miami Beach, Dr. Baim received his undergraduate degree in physics in 1971 from the University of Chicago, and his medical degree in 1975 from Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Conn.

He pursued postgraduate training in medicine and cardiology at Stanford (Calif.) University, where he worked with Dr. John Simpson to develop moveable guidewire coronary angioplasty catheters. In 1981, he joined the faculty at Harvard Medical School and established an interventional cardiology program at Beth Israel Hospital (now Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center) in Boston. The program grew to national prominence in the refinement and application of devices such as stents. In 1994, Dr. Baim became a full professor of medicine at Harvard.

In 2000, Dr. Baim moved on to Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, where he directed the Center for Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology, a nonprofit consortium of Boston teaching hospitals and engineering schools.

Dr. Baim specialized in the development and evaluation of new interventional cardiovascular devices. According to a statement from Boston Scientific, Dr. Baim "played a major role in developing technology strategies, including the assessment of technologies of acquisition and partnership candidates, and their integration with internal technologies."

He was the editor of Grossman's Cardiac Catheterization, Angiography, and Intervention, and the author of more than 300 articles.

He was founder of or consultant for more than 20 companies and medical device incubators in areas of embolic protection, thrombectomy, chronic total occlusions, arterial closure, novel stent and coatings, heart failure, and percutaneous heart valves.

Dr. Baim was remembered by his colleagues as a gifted mentor, a good friend, and a visionary in his field. He is survived by wife, Caryn Paris, sons Adam and Christopher, daughters Samantha Paris and Jenifer Pruskin, and a granddaughter, as well as his mother, Jocelyn Baim, and brother, Paul.

—Jane Locastro