On the Beat

Obituaries

Dr. Adrian Kantrowitz, who performed the first human heart transplant in the United States, died last month in Ann Arbor, Mich., from complications of heart failure. He was 90.

Although Dr. Kantrowitz enjoyed the distinction of performing that first operation, most of his 60 years of practice and research were focused on developing devices that assisted heart function, rather than replacing weak and malfunctioning hearts. His historic transplant, on Dec. 6, 1967, followed the world's first, by the South African surgeon Christiaan Barnard, by 3 days, and was the culmination of almost 4 years of transplants in dogs.

From early on in his career, Dr. Kantrowitz had collaborated with the late Dr. Michael DeBakey and others, including his wife Jean, in devising new methods for treating and sustaining gravely ill heart patients. These included the development of the left-ventricular assist device, the intra-aortic balloon pump for reducing strain on

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Dr. Kantrowitz (right), with Dr. DeBakey (center) and Dr. Barnard (left) in 1967.

the heart; and an early version of the implantable pacemaker.

Dr. Kantrowitz studied mathematics at New York University before attending the Long Island College of Medicine (now State University of New York, Brooklyn). He graduated in 1943 and served for 3 years as a surgeon in the U.S. army medical corps. After specializing in cardiology, he held various positions at Montefiore Hospital (now Montefiore Medical Center) in New York.

In 1955, he became director of cardiovascular surgery at New York's Maimonides Hospital, where he and his fellow researchers invented an electronically controlled heart-lung machine and a diaphragm booster heart that functioned as a second heart. He left Maimonides in 1970, however, after facing questions about his research, and moved to Sinai Hospital in Detroit, where he was an attending surgeon and chairman of the department of surgery. He continued experimenting with transplants, the balloon pump, and partial mechanical hearts.

In 1983 he and his wife cofounded L.VAD Technology, research and development company in Detroit that specialized in cardiovascular devices. The couple was still working on new devices until the end of his life. Shortly before his death, Dr. Kantrowitz received approval from the Food and Drug Administration to proceed with a clinical trial for a new balloon-pump variant.

Dr. Mark Silverman, a consultative cardiologist, teacher, and medical historian, died of a heart attack at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta, where he had founded the Fuqua Heart Center. He was 69 years of age.

At the time of his death, he was emeritus professor of medicine (cardiology) at Emory University, also in Atlanta, chief of cardiology at the heart center, and director of its noninvasive (electrocardiology, echo, and stress testing) laboratories.

DR. SILVERMAN

Dr. Silverman was known for his lively lectures, in which he would sometimes dress in period outfits: When teaching about the electrocardiogram, for example, he would dress and speak as its Dutch inventor, the 1924 Nobel laureate, Dr. Willem Einthoven.

Dr. Silverman published a textbook on clinical skills in primary care, numerous articles, and chapters in books on medical history, a book that explored the relationship between some heart conditions and abnormalities of the hand.

Dr. Silverman received his medical degree from the University of Chicago, after which he returned to his alma mater, Ohio State University, Columbus, for his medical residency. He worked with Dr. Hurst from 1966 to 1968 and, after serving in the U.S. Air Force at David Grant Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base, California, he returned to Atlanta in 1970 as the Emory-Piedmont Professor of Medicine and established a cardiology program at Piedmont Hospital.

—Renée Matthews