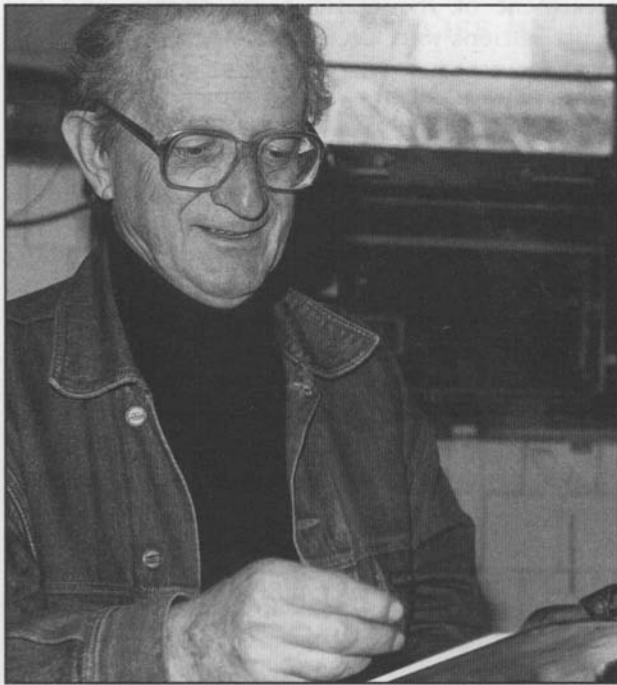


## Obituaries

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**Dr Luis Becú (1927-1997)**

**D**R LUIS BECÚ PASSED AWAY ON JUNE 26TH, 1997 at 70 years of age. The international medical community has lost an extraordinarily gifted cardiac pathologist. He had been the Chief of the Department of Anatomy and Pathology at the Children's Hospital in Buenos Aires, Argentina for over 30 years. Soon after graduation, in 1952, and already intrigued by the anatomy of congenital heart defects, he became a Fellow in cardiac pathology at the Mayo Clinic. He arrived at a propitious time, and was able to team up with John Kirklin's pioneering surgical group when they performed their first open heart operation in 1954. Not infrequently, in those early days, he used to be required in the operating room to help unravel the anatomical mysteries of the hearts undergoing repair.

Back in Argentina, the Argentine Scientific Research Council appointed him as a Chief Researcher in 1979, and he became the Director of

the Buenos Aires Children's Hospital for the period between 1987-1990. Despite those significant and important achievements, his charming and picturesque personality was more appealing and telling than suggested merely by his biographical data.

He possessed a privileged intellect. This, combined with the pathologist's sharp eye, enabled him to see new and different things usually not perceived by others. The term "higgledy-piggledy", used to describe the myocardial disarray, frequently found in certain forms of so-called diffuse cardiovascular disease, depicts his humorous and provocative style in conveying his innovative medical ideas.

His endless curiosity and avidity to learn led him, late in life, to investigate the basics of myocardial architecture and thus propose a new anatomical model to understand the now fashionable ventricular diastolic function. At the same time, he registered at the Buenos Aires University at the age of 60 to study Ancient History. With similar enthusiasm and young spirit, he devoted time to play golf, grow cactuses, and to weave rugs. He was a shrewd thinker whose creative ideas usually ignited and fuelled the imagination, and shaped the medical thinking, of many Paediatric Cardiologists. We owe him a special debt as he has been our beloved and provocative teacher, counselor, and friend, and our inspiration as cardiologists.

Luis Becú will be remembered by generations to come for the uniqueness and distinction of his mind and soul, as well as for his scientific contributions to medicine.

*Horacio Capelli.*

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Rachel Snitcowsky (1936-1996)

FOR BRAZILIAN CARDIOLOGISTS, RACHEL WAS A symbol of perseverance. Her passing has left a void amongst both her friends and her patients. Rachel was an enthusiastic pediatric cardiologist, always inspiring and encouraging the young doctors to embrace their mission with both passion and independence. Born in 1936, she suffered herself from tetralogy of Fallot, and was palliated by construction of a Blalock-Taussig shunt in the 1950's. She was then brought up with extreme care by her patients as their only child.

After her graduation in 1960 in Medicine at Juiz de Fora, Brazil, she trained in Cardiology at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, and later at the University of Illinois, Chicago, where she

spent the period from 1968 to 1970. Returning to Brazil, she dedicated herself to the study of congenital and acquired health disease in children, working at the Heart Institute of São Paulo University.

She was instrumental in establishing our National Program for the prevention and treatment of rheumatic heart disease, and her contributions were decisive in its implementation and maintenance in all parts of the country. Adored by her young patients, she was a living example of how a person with a congenital heart defect can help people in such an important way and also excel in the medical field.

Rachel was also one of the founders of the Department of Pediatric Cardiology of the Brazilian Society of Cardiology, and organised several courses and symposiums. She made expressive and extensive scientific contributions to our knowledge of rheumatic heart disease, and on the outcome of children with valvar prostheses.

Her force of personality, optimistic view of life, and also her warm laughter, will long remain in the memory of all her friends. Rachel was unequivocally a landmark figure in the evolution of Brazilian Pediatric Cardiology.

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