



Dr. Michael F. Appel

December 28, 1937 - July 31, 2019

Dr. Michael Frederick Appel, 81, passed away on July 31, 2019, in Austin, Texas, where he and his wife, Madeleine, had moved after their Houston home of almost 50 years was flooded by Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

Dr. Appel was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, on December 28, 1937. He spent his first few years in Alice, Texas, with his parents, the late Dr. Myron Henry Appel and Ida Doris Pearline Appel and his late brother, Dr. Truman Frank Appel. Ultimately the family settled in Corpus Christi, where his father opened a general practice.

Michael graduated from The Lawrenceville School near Princeton, N.J., where he belonged to the Cum Laude Society. He completed his pre-med requirements at Tulane University and then entered medical school at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, from which he graduated in 1961 with honors. He was elected to AOA, the medical honor society that recognizes scholarship.

Michael served an internship at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, then returned to Houston for a general surgery residency at Baylor University College of Medicine affiliated hospitals. He completed his general surgery residency at Columbia-Presbyterian in New York City.

In 1962, at the outset of his residency years, Michael married Madeleine Greene Appel, also of Corpus Christi. During the years in New York, the couple had one child, Sarah Molly, who, to their tremendous sorrow, died at birth. After completing his residency, Michael spent two years in the U.S. Air Force, during which time, to their great joy, their first son, Louis, was born. Three and a half years later, shortly after Michael entered private practice in Houston, again to their great joy, their second son, Noah, was born.

Dr. Appel practiced general surgery in Houston for 44 years, first in a two-person practice, then with Kelsey Seybold Clinic, and ultimately in his own practice. He served as Chief of General Surgery at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital (now CHI Baylor St. Luke's) for 25 of

those years and was elected to a term as Chief of Staff. He held the positions of Clinical Professor of Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine and Clinical Professor of Surgery at the University of Texas Medical School-Houston. He was a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology.

A pioneer in the field of endoscopy in Houston, Dr. Appel introduced surgical endoscopy to St. Luke's, where he performed the first colonoscopic polypectomy, the first endoscopic duodenal polypectomy, and the first laparoscopic adrenalectomy. He also completed the first ERCP with sphincterotomy and stone removal in this region of the country. In 2004 he was named the Distinguished Houston Surgeon for the year by the Houston Surgical Society, and in 2009, St. Luke's honored him with the Master Clinician Award. Dr. Appel also authored numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals.

As the Houston Surgical Society wrote, "In the tradition of his father, Dr. Appel always put his patients first—providing skilled, deeply knowledgeable, heartfelt and ethical and humanistic care to the thousands who came to him for treatment. He was available to his patients at all hours of the day and night, patiently answering questions and soothing worries. His love of medicine in general and surgery in particular translated itself into his devotion to teaching medical students and housestaff with whom he spent hours daily. He proved himself a forward looking leader, dedicated to the ethical delivery of medical/surgical services, patient care, St. Luke's Hospital and the general surgeons and general surgery staff of St. Luke's..."

While medicine was his professional life, he held his sons, Louis and Noah, and wife, Madeleine—and later his daughters-in-law, Jennifer and Gila, and grandchildren, Daniela, Ari, and Gabriela and Ben and Sarah—his dearest and most prized gifts. His love for them all was enduring and deeply felt. He was there for them at every hour of the day and night and all the important moments in their lives.

He was also a Renaissance Man. From his father he inherited the ability to fix anything. He ran marathons and triathlons, fished and tied flies, taught his family to enjoy camping under the stars, and enjoyed reading. Music of all genres soothed his soul. He sang in the Chapel Choir at Lawrenceville and in the Tulane-Newcomb A Cappella Choir at Tulane University. His passion was rowing/sculling, on which he embarked first with the Bay Area Rowing Club and then the Greater Houston Rowing Club.

In addition to his wife, sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren, Dr. Appel is survived by his sister-in-law, Frances Greene; nieces and nephews, Leslie Appel and children Talor and Colton; Sarah Appel Lyons (Jesse) and children Emma, Abigail, and Nathan; Jennifer

Greene (Robert Garisto) and son Daniel; David Greene (Deb Palmer) and children Ellie and Jacob Julian; cousins Tom Appel (Phyllis) and Stephanie Chase (Rob Rosemont) and son, Camilo; and special friends Adel Cruz and Karen Sisk, who ran his office throughout his years of practice; Dr. Elaine Peltier, his rowing partner, and her husband, Richard; Rheta and Bob Page and Barbara and Tim Templin, lifelong friends; and Clara Binford and Perla Rosenstock, also dear friends.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing may make a donation in Dr. Michael Appel's name to People's Community Clinic, 1101 Camino La Costa, Austin, Texas 78752.

Cemetery

Seaside Memorial Park
4357 Ocean Dr.
Corpus Christi, TX, 78412

Events

AUG 2 Graveside Service 01:00PM

Seaside Memorial Park
4357 Ocean Dr., Corpus Christi, TX, US, 78412

AUG 11 Memorial Service 01:00PM

Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism
801 Bering Drive, Houston, TX, US, 77057

Comments



“ Michael was one of my favorite people and kindest colleagues. His sense of humor and his outstanding care not only touched me personally, but also my wife, Mary, and my son, Travis, both of whom Michael did surgery on. I have not been able to see and interact with Mike since he retired which I have missed but which was tolerable knowing he was "out there" in San Antonio enjoying retirement. Now I am truly saddened by his passing. My family and I send our sincere condolences you, Madeleine, and your family.

Bill

WC Watters, MD

William C Watters MD - August 13, 2019 at 11:13 AM



“ Madeleine, I just learned of Michael's passing. Please except my very deepest sympathy he was an extraordinary person as of course are you. My thoughts are with you. Ellen Cohen

Ellen Cohen - August 09, 2019 at 05:55 PM



“ It was my great pleasure to work with Dr Appel for over 20 years . Working with him was always a challenge , he kept me on my toes . He was a true gem !

Dan Cutler CST

Daniel Cutler - August 06, 2019 at 11:48 AM



“ Sad to hear of Dr. Appel's death. Of all the countless patients whose lives he saved with brilliant surgery and compassion was my father's. In 1976 Dad was at St. Luke's with abdominal infection secondary to too many rads following bladder cancer. Dr. Appel came over in the middle of the night and performed a life-saving IND procedure in his hospital room. He lived until 2003! Over the years, I would run into Mike and would thank him and give him our father's regards. God rest his gentle soul.

Bob Roush - August 04, 2019 at 08:21 PM



“ Dear Madeleine,

Wendy and I send our deepest condolences to you and your family on the loss of Michael.

It was my extreme good fortune to have spent most of my 57 years of practice in close partnership with Mike caring for our very large Inflammatory Bowel practice. We were very happy to work closely together in what became a Medical/Surgical approach to the management of the patients always using the current state of the art. I can't be sure of what our patients thought of this Brit with the funny accent, but I know well how they loved Mike. Mike away from the office or O.R. was an outstanding chair of several important committees at St. Luke's. Next comes his wonderful teaching skill. His award from St. Luke's speaks for itself and for his activity in the weekly GI/Surgery conference every Thursday morning. Mike's low key Socratic teaching gave his house staff extreme respect unless they deserved otherwise in which case the approach was almost avuncular.

I had the opportunity to see Mike professionally on a few occasions and enjoyed the assistance of Adel and Karen (in the office) who were a great team when added to Mike. His bedside manner was wonderful, I assume nurtured at an early stage by his father as was the case for me. Mike's athleticism was remarkable along with his accomplishments. Always a cheerful look, always reassuring.

I am proud to have been his friend and colleague. As you well know Mike was a loving family man always happy to fill me in what you, Louis and Noah were up to.

With great sorrow, Philip

Philip Bentlif MD - August 04, 2019 at 05:17 PM



“ We are so sorry to hear of your loss
Mike was a great man and a great doctor
Our thoughts and prayers are with you all

Stan & Jan Conner

jan & stan conner - August 04, 2019 at 04:13 PM



“ Dr. Appel was the first general surgeon that I had the pleasure of working with as a student in 1991. He was kind, patient and he took the time to explain to me everything that he did in that procedure. The experience was priceless and I never forgot the clinical things he taught me. 28 years later and I always think of him when I

pick up a surgical instrument. Rest In Heaven Dr. Appel! Your kind and gentle spirit will be greatly missed.

Nikita Cushenberry - August 03, 2019 at 08:44 PM



“ I first met Dr. Appel in 2000 during my general surgery rotation at St Luke’s Episcopal Hospital. Those were tough years for me since I had just arrived at Baylor from being an attending in France to re-doing my residency in the US. Dr. Appel greeted me with warmth, respect, humor and taught me a lot during our times in the OR and morning conferences. He was the most skilled general surgeon I had the privilege of working with. Then, when I became an attending in plastic surgery, we continued to collaborate and had common patients until his retirement. He was a great man and I will always have him in my heart. Azita Madjidi, MD

Azita Madjidi ,MD - August 03, 2019 at 05:12 PM



“ Dr. Appel was an exceptional physician. He was so compassionate & kind. I will never forget him. May he “Rest In Peace”. Amen!

Mary Ann Zimmerman - August 06, 2019 at 06:47 PM



“ I thank god for Dr.appel he was my main man,Dr.Appel took me under his wing and train me in Endoscopy as a tech. I am going to miss him alike,may god bless his wife and his family.

walter smith - August 03, 2019 at 05:05 PM



“ My first appointment w/Dr. Appel was in 2006 and I was very frightened. He put my mind at ease then and through several subsequent procedures. He was kind, considerate and gentle. I once overheard a conversation of family members of another of his patients who were praising his wonderful bedside manner.

I once wrote him a note to express my thanks to him and his outstanding staff: Adel Cruz and Karen Sisk! I will always be grateful to him!

Winona Stewart - August 12, 2019

Winona Stewart - August 12, 2019 at 04:14 PM



“ he was my dearest friend for many years ,1968 & can't believe he is gone. a great man & great loss.

jerome bart

jerome bart - August 14, 2019 at 04:57 PM



“ Madeleine,

My deepest sympathies on Michael's passing. You're in my thoughts and prayers.
Scott Hochberg

