

Obituary

Page Albert Willis Anderson (1942–2008)



PAGE ANDERSON, AN INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN physician and scientist, died unexpectedly on November 8, 2008, at the age of 66, while attending the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Child Health Research Centers Annual Retreat in The Woodlands, Texas. His career was marked by outstanding achievements in basic research, clinical research, patient care, and mentoring. His field of research focused on the developmental changes in cardiac structure and function from the fetus to the adult, extending from the myofilament to the living heart.

Page was born January 12, 1942, in Berkley, California. He completed his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of California at Berkeley, and graduated as a Doctor of Medicine from Duke University in 1964. He served in the Army of the United States of America from 1965 through 1968 during the Vietnam War. He met his wife, Nadia Malouf, while they were both residents at the Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, California.

In 1970, he joined the Department of Pediatrics at Duke University Medical Center, specializing in Pediatric Cardiology and Cell Biology. Over the years, his research discoveries in the laboratory included the finding that multiple isoforms of cardiac troponin T are expressed in the mammalian heart. He found that the pattern of expression changes with development, varies among species, and that this pattern is affected by cardiac disease. Additionally, his laboratory evaluated the role of the complement cascade in the altered vascular permeability that follows cardiopulmonary bypass. He demonstrated that blocking the complement cascade at the level of the C3 convertase decreases the severity of altered vascular permeability after cardiopulmonary bypass. His most recent project was a collaboration with Nadia, his wife of 40 years, and Professor of Pathology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Together, they demonstrated that stem cells derived from adults differentiate into cardiac myocytes when engrafted in the living heart. Their work focused on understanding the biology of differentiation of stem cells into a cardiomyocyte.

In addition to these distinguished and extraordinary discoveries in basic science, Page left another lasting legacy. He was first and foremost a pediatrician and an advocate for the child. More than anything, he loved children. He showed compassion, and took meticulous care of several hundreds of patients, many of whom he cared for over decades, until they had children of their own. He called them his friends. In this way, he was a man unique in his ability to embrace medicine and humanity. Over the past 8 years, he became heavily involved in clinical research in the Pediatric Heart Network sponsored by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. This became his passion, as he felt that his legacy should be to determine better ways to care for babies with cardiac disease.

Among his many responsibilities at Duke, he served as Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Pediatrics, the Duke Principal Investigator for

the Pediatric Heart Network, Program Director for the fellowship program in Pediatric Cardiology, and Principal Investigator for the Duke training grant in Pediatric Cardiology. He was also a mentor to faculty across the department. In recognition of his accomplishments as a clinician, teacher, mentor, and investigator, in April, 2008, he was named the Beverly Morgan Distinguished Professor in Pediatric Cardiology.

Page Anderson was a gentleman and scholar, who gave freely of his prodigious talents to his patients,

his trainees, and his colleagues. He provided us with his counsel and his wisdom. He uplifted all of us by his commitment to excellence. He graced our lives.

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