

Obituaries



FRANCES PHILLIPS CONKLIN, MD, of Cranston, died at home surrounded by her family on December 20th, 2022.

Born July 8, 1924, she and the late J. Wallace Conklin, MD, had four children: Suzanne Conklin, PhD, and her children Nina and Amy of Providence; Elizabeth Conklin, MD, of Narragansett; Jennifer Conklin and her husband Vincent Pera, Jr., MD, of Cranston; and Jonathan Conklin of East Greenwich.

Dr. Conklin attended schools in Port Jervis, New York, and then went to the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she received her degree in zoology. With a polio epidemic afflicting the country, she obtained a degree in physical therapy from Harvard University, and then spent a year in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, treating polio patients. Following her year doing PT, she enrolled at the University of Vermont College of Medicine, from which she graduated in 1951. She completed her internship at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital and her residency in radiology at the University of Minnesota. She then did a fellowship at Temple University in radiation therapy (oncology), which at the time was a branch of medicine in its infancy.

Dr. Conklin moved to Cranston in 1956 and began her medical career at The Miriam Hospital and then Rhode Island Hospital, where she started the radiation therapy department. She later transitioned to private practice.

Dr. Conklin was a charter member of the RI State Board of Licensure and Discipline, and she was the first woman president of the Providence Medical Association. She was named Woman Physician of the Year in 1989 by the RI Medical Women's Association, of which she was a founding member, and she was inducted into the RI Heritage Hall of Fame in 1991. In 1990, the Rhode Island Medical Society presented Dr. Conklin with the Charles L. Hill Award for leadership and service in the medical profession. In 1985, the RI Division of the American Cancer Society awarded her the Terese Lasser award in recognition of outstanding service. She was a Fellow of the American College of Radiology.

The family gives its most sincere thanks to Drs. Troise, Donat, and Lucas, who provided extraordinary care and counsel, particularly in recent years. The family also thanks the home care providers: Fatuma, Irma, Beatrice, Louise, Robin, Lydia, Ophelia, Yanick, Nyia, and Fatou, who offered care, compassion, and understanding.

A celebration will be planned for a future date. In her memory, please consider donating to the Erik R. Laisi Memorial Scholarship Fund at St. Andrew's School, 63 Federal Road, Barrington, RI 02806. ❖



MARY DESPINA LEKAS, MD, DSc, a pioneer in Rhode Island's medical community, passed away on January 24, 2023 at the age of 94. She was the beloved wife of the late Harold W. Picozzi. Dr. Mary, as she was fondly called by all who knew her, and Harold were married for 31 years.

She was the first woman to head the Otolaryngology Department at Rhode Island Hospital, as Surgeon-in-Chief from 1983 until she retired in 1996. She was also the first woman to be Professor of Clinical Otolaryngology at Brown University's medical school. Dr. Mary was the first woman on the East Coast to become a Fellow in the Triological Society, the most prestigious society of her specialty. In 1980, she was named the first woman to be elected President of the New England Otolaryngological Society. In 1992, Dr. Mary was named Rhode Island's Woman Physician of the Year and was awarded the President's citation from the Triological Society in 1993. Honors continued during 1996, the year of her retirement, by the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Foundation and the American Broncho-Esophagological Association.

She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Clark University, Worcester, MA, in 1949, and earned a graduate degree at Boston University and an MD degree with honors at the University of Athens Medical School. She received a Master's Degree in Science from Brown University and was Clinical Professor Emerita of Surgery at Brown University School of Medicine.

Her professional career included private practice with privileges at Rhode Island Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, the Veterans Administration Hospital and Miriam Hospital. She was past president of the Providence Medical Association and was recipient of the Providence Medical Association's Distinguished Service Award.

In 1997, Dr. Mary and Harold established the Dr. Mary Despina Lekas, MD, DSc Endowed Chair in Biology at Clark University. That same year, Dr. Mary received an Honorary Doctorate Degree (Doctor of Science) from Clark University that recognized her remarkable professional career. In 2007, she established "The Mary D. Lekas Fund for the Advancement of Women in Medicine" at Brown University Medical School.

Contributions in Dr. Mary's memory may be made to the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Dr. Mary Despina Lekas Endowment Fund, 175 Oaklawn Avenue, Cranston, RI 02905 or online at www.annunciationri.org. ❖



CHAFIC SEBASTIAN RAAD, MD, 87, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, formerly of Barrington, passed away on December 14th, 2022 peacefully at home. Dr. Raad was born on May 21st, 1935 in Taiuva, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

He graduated from medical school at the University of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro in 1959 and was an anesthesiologist at Pawtucket Memorial Hospital in Pawtucket for 38 years.

In 2012, he received the Distinguished Service Award in recognition and appreciation of his exemplary contributions to the Rhode Island Society of Anesthesiologists and to the people of Rhode Island. He was an insightful leader, clinician, mentor and caring physician.

Aside from his work, his family and children were the most important aspects of his life. He loved them all so much and would always sacrifice his needs for them. He was simultaneously brilliant, caring, kind and hilarious. His quirky and random humor and unique, gigantic smile would always brighten people's days.

He loved reading, studying, boating and soccer, and never missed a chance to run up and down the field alongside one of his children playing a game, even after a long night at work.

Dr. Raad leaves behind his loving wife, Margaret-Anne, of 60 years, and his children, Marco Antonio, Luciana Alyssa, Roberto Salim and Carlos Eduardo and his adoring grandchildren Alexander, Nathaniel, Sebastian and Andres, as well as his son and daughter-in-laws Matthew, Laura, Mabel and Diana.

In his memory, donations may be made to St. Jude Hospital at <https://www.stjude.org/> ❖