

IN MEMORY OF SOLANGE AKSELROD (1950-2008)



Solange Akselrod, a long-term supporter of Computers in Cardiology since 1974 and an incumbent Board Member, died on June 2nd, 2008 at her home in suburban Tel Aviv.

Solange was born in Antwerp, Belgium, on April 10, 1950. From a very young age, Solange became fluent in six languages. After graduating from high school at the top of her class, she decided to continue her education in Israel and thus fulfill her dream of participating in the building of the young Jewish state. In 1969, at 19, motivated by her newly found independence, she moved to Israel by herself and enrolled as an undergraduate student at Tel Aviv University, which was founded only two years earlier. Over the years, she created a very strong bond with Israel and its people, and maintained it throughout her life.

After completing with distinction the undergraduate program in Physics and Mathematics in 1971 and subsequently earning a Master's degree in Physics of condensed matter in 1974, she decided to expand her academic interests into biological sciences, and pursued a Ph.D. degree in Physiology, which she completed in 1979. Subsequently, she spent two years as a post-doctoral fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), working on a ground-breaking project aimed at exploring the mechanisms of heart rate variability and cardiovascular control, which resulted in a seminal publication in *Science*.

After accepting the responsibility of leading the research and educational activities of the Medical Physics group at Tel Aviv University, Solange established an open-door policy that reflected her personal style of close involvement in the work of her students. As a result, over the years, she became one of the most popular advisors at the School of Physics and supervised record numbers of graduate students. Her list of publications (over 200 articles) reveals unparalleled breadth of her interest and the diversity of interests of her students, and attests to her insatiable curiosity and courage to venture into unknown fields. Her prolific career has been internationally recognized not only by her publications, but also by her service on boards of directors of multiple professional societies. Her tireless involvement with Computers in Cardiology brought international recognition to her extremely diverse research efforts, and above all earned her multiple friends virtually all over the world.

Solange is survived by her four children: daughter Ayelet (1975), son Aviad (1977), daughter Inbal (1980) and daughter Michal (1987). She has been an extremely dedicated mother who took enormous pride in every step they had made and saw their upbringing as a parallel career, which was of utmost importance to her, while maintaining an uncompromised professional level at work.

As one of Solange's first students who spent a decade working with her, I have been fortunate to know her not only as a great mentor but also as a warm, caring friend for just short of three decades. With this perspective, I believe that her great spirit of teaching and her willingness to learn from others were an admirable and rare trait, which made the experience of learning from her so unique. I truly believe that only great teachers know how to give their friendship to their students, and Solange definitely had this ability. Her legacy lives on in the many professionals she raised. They cherish her memory deep in their hearts.

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