

PAST RECIPIENTS

The William J. Rashkind Memorial Lecture was established in 1986 by Dr. Rashkind and his family shortly before his death. Dr. Rashkind was an internationally known pediatric cardiologist credited for the development of balloon atrial septostomy, also known as the "Rashkind procedure." Dr. Rashkind was an active volunteer for the AHA both at the national and state levels. The first lecture was presented in 1987.

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| 1987 | Paul H. Heintzen, MD
<i>The Imaging Plane —
A Bridge Between Science
and Art</i> | 1999 | Stanton A. Glantz, PhD
<i>Tobacco: Using Politics to
Prevent Heart Disease</i> |
| 1988 | Richard A. Selzer
<i>The Surgeon as Writer</i> | 2000 | William Pinsky, MD
<i>Racing for Kids®</i> |
| 1989 | Preservation Hall Jazz Band | 2001 | Chuck Huss, MD
<i>Everest Odyssey</i> |
| 1990 | Gerald Weissmann
<i>My Hunt for Dr. Oliver
Wendell Holmes</i> | 2002 | Lester D. Friedman, PhD
<i>High Anxiety: Physicians and
the American Media</i> |
| 1991 | Lawrence K. Altman, MD
<i>Werner Forssmann and Self-
Experimentation: Who Goes
First?</i> | 2003 | Howard Schatz
<i>Visual Art (Photography)
Following Retina</i> |
| 1992 | Joshua M. Wiener, PhD
<i>American Health Care in Crisis</i> | 2004 | Betsy Dresser, PhD
<i>Saving Endangered Species
Through Assisted
Reproduction Technology, or
Sex in the Test Tube!</i> |
| 1993 | Jonathan Yardley
<i>The Current State of American
Literature</i> | 2005 | Eric Hetzel
<i>Truth Through Fiction in
Hollywood: Advancing the
American Discourse on
Science and Medicine</i> |
| 1994 | Joe Wilder, MD
<i>Origins of the Physician Artist</i> | | |
| 1995 | Sherwin B. Nuland, MD
<i>As Others See Us: The Artist
Looks at the Physician</i> | | |
| 1996 | Preservation Hall Jazz Band | | |
| 1997 | Robert S. Langer, ScD
<i>Drug Delivery Systems and
Tissue Engineering</i> | | |
| 1998 | Renee C. Fox, PhD
<i>The Genesis, Evolution, and
Significance of American
Bioethics</i> | | |



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Council on Cardiovascular Disease in the Young William J. Rashkind Memorial Lecture



Roberto Canessa, MD
Paul Harris 1722
Montevideo, Uruguay



Dr. Roberto Canessa was born in Uruguay on January 17, 1953. He is a renowned pediatric cardiologist and has been awarded three national distinctions in Medicine in Uruguay.

In October 1972, he was with his rugby team aboard an ill-fated flight from Argentina to Chile that crashed in the Andes. He and a companion reached civilization more than two months later, and their survival and rescue were later featured in a well-known book and film entitled *Alive*.

He was an outstanding rugby player who represented Uruguay and still holds the record for Top Try Scorer in Uruguay.

He is married to Laura and has three children, two sons and one daughter.



One day 34 years ago already, my life changed in 5 minutes. I went from feeling annoyed at having missed a day's stay in Chile playing rugby to being in the middle of the wreck of a plane that had crashed in the Andean icy mountains. All around me was a nightmare.

It was hard for me to understand that I was living in a different, terrible, desolate world. The only thing that I could hold on to was myself, and I knew that I could only gain by helping others. I did help all those that my strength allowed me to, but of course that wasn't enough. It happened day after day during the next months. I felt comforted by my friends still alive and by knowing that I wasn't alone in the struggle. The talks with the wounded that were thankful for what I did for them. The gratefulness of the team captain...

HUMAN GROUPS IN A CRISIS SITUATION. REAL EXPERIENCE.

Roberto Canessa, MD

In our community getting the most basic things became a challenge. A glass of water meant having to melt snow when, and only if, there was sunshine. Our bed meant piling up with our legs tight and numb until sleep gave in to our fatigue. I might as well not talk about food. I used to ask God why He was so mean and subjected us in such a way to survive. The wind began to blow at 4 in the afternoon, and the mountain trembled with avalanches of snow as soon as the sun went down. It was easy to die, the bodies of our dead friends lying there reminded me of it, and I felt humiliation at not even having the strength to bury them. We fell when trying to walk, we were short of breath and we got buried in the snow; most important of all, we had to save energy because we were drying up as a green branch under the sun which had been cut off from its tree.

On the nights when the wind calmed down, I would look up at the sky and see the same Three Marys that I had watched so many times from my house as a small boy; it seemed impossible that they were so near and yet so far away, but I could only watch them for a brief moment because the cold was terrible.

We lived thinking "maybe tomorrow" we shall leave this place. We survived out of stubbornness. We prayed much, we talked to God and we were very near to Him. I used to tell Him: "If I have to die it won't be because I'm giving up, but let me live a little longer..."

After the snow avalanche hit us, instead of feeling sad for the missing ones, we pitied ourselves for having to continue suffering knowing that we would probably end up dying anyway.

From the beginning of the accident, we tried to walk when the snow storms wouldn't prevent us from doing it. That's how we learned that dark glasses save our eyes, that the snow starts to soften in the afternoon and that one cannot walk with shoes alone. We also experienced that wet clothes freeze when the sun goes down, and that one cannot get through the night without a sleeping bag. Not knowing where we were, whether it was Chile or Argentina, it became uncertain which way to begin our search. Finally three of us set out walking and achieved a goal that we thought impossible, something that we always dreamed of and prayed it would happen.

Many people wonder how we did it; we ask ourselves the same question. I felt I was committed to doing something, to somehow contribute to our survival.

I was sure that I wasn't going to be part of a failure. I prayed to God not to make the challenge impossible, that I would do the rest. Even as I thought a few steps into the Andes would be useless, I knew that was the best I could do. I learned that when hope weakens, we must keep making the effort for the sake of itself; it's the only thing that brings spiritual peace, apart from achieving our goals.