

## Profile

1. **John Nihoyannopoulos, MD**  
My father did not use his middle initial.

2. Paragraph 1: OK

From paragraph 2:

John grew up in a traditional rural Greek family. He was the eldest of three brothers. Both, his primary and secondary education were completed in Amfissa. Although his two brothers studied law, John entered the Medical School of the University of Athens, Greece at the age of 16 years, from where he graduated in 1933 with honours.

After a 15 year of practicing general medicine and cardiology, in 1948 he went to Paris-France where he spent three years at the Lariboisiere Hospital with Professors P Soulie and LeNegre to specialise in clinical cardiology. In 1954 however, he obtained a bursary to go to John's Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and joined a group of national and international fellows lead by Dr Helen Taussig for the study of "blue babies". He spent two very productive and exciting years that were to be the inspiration for his future career.

On his return to Athens in 1954, he obtained the position of assistant professor at the university of Athens and established the novel specialisation of Pediatric Cardiology at the children's hospital of "Agia Sophia". In 1960, he worked closely with the newly founded Cardiology Department at Hippokration Hospital until he eventually retired in 1988.

John Nihoyannopoulos was the pioneer Pediatric Cardiologist in Greece who worked hard with exceptional devotion to children with simple and complex congenital heart disease. During all these years, he maintained his close links with Dr Taussig who visited him on several occasions in Athens, until she tragically died on a car accident...?date.

Because cardiac surgery was in its infancy in Greece at that time, he established close academic links with the Texas Heart Institute, John's Hopkins and New York Hospital, Cornell Medical Center to where he sent children with congenital heart disease for complex surgery. John was an exceptional clinician who with just a careful physical examination and an electrocardiogram, could send his young patients for surgery in the United States always with the most precise diagnoses. At the same time, he saw and encouraged the parallel development of cardiac surgery in Athens where many children started to be operated.

In 1972 John became President of the European Society of Pediatric Cardiology and organised the 11<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Pediatric Cardiology in Rhodes-Greece. It was one of the most memorable meetings, near the island of Kos, Ippokrates' sanctuary. His mentor, Helen Taussig was the guest of honour of course but also Alexander Nadas,

Bill Rasking, Denton Cooley, Henry Neufeld, Dan McNamara, Mary Allen Engle and many other pioneers of pediatric cardiology honoured the meeting.

John was at the right place at the right time in the early fifties when Pediatric cardiology was really created. On his return to Greece from John's Hopkins, he was able to form a small group of enthusiastic paediatricians and cardiologists concentrating on children with congenital heart disease. In 1978 the Hellenic Pediatric Cardiological Society was eventually founded on his own initiative following his many years of political and diplomatic battles.

John was a distinguished teacher and always passionate in explaining the logic behind the clinical diagnosis. Always polite, erudite, intelligent and subtle with a fine sense of humour, he had a marvellous personal touch with the patient.

John passed away peacefully in September 1990, leaving forever in our memory this bright example of a pioneer clinician. His morals were always integral to his personality and his contribution to the evolution of pediatric cardiology in Greece essential. He left behind his beloved wife Myrto who always stood by his side during the hardest times, his son Petros and daughter Marika. Following his father's footsteps, Petros, an eminent cardiologist himself, pursue a bright career in London-UK at Hammersmith Hospital.

For those of us who knew John Nihoyannopoulos, Petros' career in cardiology is probably the best offer in his father's memoriam.