

## Remembering Houria (Suzy) Hassouna, MD, BCh, PhD

Laura Mott, Director, Grants and Programs, HTRS



Houria (Suzy) Hassouna, MD, BCh, PhD, passed away peacefully at her home on October 24, 2018. Dr. Hassouna was Professor of Medicine, Division of Thrombosis; Elsa D and Carl E Rehberg Hematology Research Professor; and Director, Special Coagulation Center at Michigan State University (MSU). Originally from Egypt, she attended medical school at Cairo University and also studied in England, Scotland, France and Switzerland. She received her PhD from Rockefeller University in New York. Dr. Hassouna is preceded in death by her beloved husband, Salah K. Adel, MD, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Cairo University and Wayne State University, who passed away in 2016, and with whom she had three children. She was an esteemed colleague of Dr. John Penner, who retired as Chief of the Thrombosis and Hemostasis Division at MSU, and who also passed away in 2016.

In the *International Review of Thrombosis* (Vol. 7 No. 4 2012), Dr. Hassouna was mentioned as someone who “has made tremendous contributions to the understanding of blood coagulation factors, particularly vitamin K dependent factors and also natural anticoagulants like protein C.” Specifically, in 1989, Dr. Hassouna was the first person in the world to publish a second biochemical cause in protein C associated with thrombosis by documenting resistance to inactivation of both activated factor V and factor VIII by activated protein C (APC) in a 33-year-old individual with recurrent thrombosis since age 21. (US patent 5, 051,355 awarded September 1991). This 33-year-old male with extensive and intractable venous thrombosis since age 21 was referred to Dr. Hassouna by Vincent Picozzi, MD in October 1988 from the Virginia Mason Clinic in Seattle for evaluation of a recent superior sagittal vein thrombosis despite being on continuous heparin drip for three years. He was subsequently found to be homozygous for the factor V Leiden mutation. He became well and never had a recurrence of his thrombosis. In 1993, Prof. Bjorn Dahlback of Malmo University recognized the familial transmission of the condition first reported by Dr. Hassouna in 1989 and named it APC resistance. The *International Review of Thrombosis* also referred to Dr. Hassouna as a “worldwide leading expert in the field of blood coagulation,” and as “one of the global leaders in both basic and clinical blood coagulation research.”

Dr. Hassouna became a member of the Hemostasis and Thrombosis Research Society (HTRS) in 2012.



She served on the Scientific Review Committee every year, which is how I came to know her via email and telephone. Dr. Hassouna had a passion for mentoring young investigators and encouraging them to enter her field. (She frequently emailed me with the name and email of a new fellow she wanted to sign up with HTRS.) Two years ago, she invited me to speak at Grand Rounds at MSU and I was fortunate to be able to meet her in person, as well (photo, left). She was one of the HTRS reviewers who has touched me in a special way. Dr. Hassouna had a delightful personality and was truly a lovely and loving person. Every email I

received from her made my day. Who wouldn't feel that way after getting messages like these and more:

- *Know that I support you with all my heart.*
- *You are a member of my family and I appreciate it more than I can express in words.*
- *Many thanks for unsurpassed quality and dedication to outstanding excellence. With admiration and awe. Suzy*
- *I wish you a wonderful week free of hassles and worries.*
- *Good morning Laura on this rainy grey day, hope all is well I really miss you.*
- *Dear Laura: so prompt as lightening with the response. I Love you with all my heart Laura.*
- *And my personal favorite: Dear Laura I hope Paximany [sic] Phil after he sees his shadow sends you a care package filled with a new spring wardrobe.*

A month before she left us, Dr. Hassouna was still scoring HTRS award applications and wrote in her last



email to me: *“Dear Laura: I replied to doodle poll and I am frantically reviewing score sheets. My forever appreciation for your diligence and friendship. Much love Laura and have a pleasant weekend. Suzy.”* Much love to you too, Suzy. Many thanks for unsurpassed quality and dedication to outstanding excellence. I wish you a wonderful eternity free of hassles and worries. With admiration and awe. Laura.

A memorial luncheon will be held this **Saturday, 11/3 at 12:00 noon at the University Club at MSU** in memory of Dr. Hassouna. You are encouraged to share your experiences with and memories of Dr. Hassouna at the event as a comfort to the family and others who are experiencing a sense of loss during this difficult time. If you do not wish to speak or cannot attend, you may send a letter expressing your condolences to the family at the address below.

**1555 West Pond Drive  
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There will be limited space available and the family has requested a head count, so if you wish to attend please RSVP to Rebecca Johnson at [rebecca.johnson@hc.msu.edu](mailto:rebecca.johnson@hc.msu.edu) or 517-432-9124 no later than 2:00 pm this Wednesday 10/31.