

## OBITUARY

### In memoriam: Rashad Sami Barsoum

Rashad Sami Barsoum, a pioneer in nephrology in Egypt and Africa, and former secretary general of the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and inaugural past president of the African Association of Nephrology (AFRAN), died on 25 October 2022, at the age of 81, after a long illness with pancreatic cancer and its complications, all borne with much fortitude and serenity.

Barsoum's contributions to the ISN were massive and distinguished. As secretary general (1999–2005), he demonstrated outstanding leadership and made friends everywhere he went. He was a major promoter of the society in Africa and the Middle East. He was greatly sought after as a speaker because of his outstanding knowledge, technical skills, remarkable clinical acumen and eloquence. Barsoum served the ISN in various capacities for over 20 years—beginning with leading its first conference in Africa, on electrolytes, in Cairo in 1987, as councillor in 1993, secretary general in 1999, member of the nomination committee three times, and as chair of the awards committee (2009). The transformation of a fledgling Sister Centre programme into a vibrant set of world partnerships was especially noteworthy. Former President Robert Atkins remembers, "We worked closely together. Rashad was much loved and respected throughout the world of nephrology—he will be greatly missed." Barsoum was truly one of a handful of leaders that forever established the ISN's dominant global outreach in nephrology. The society honoured him with its Roscoe Robinson Award in 2007 and the ISN Africa Pioneer in Nephrology Award.

Rashad Barsoum was born in Assiut, Egypt, on 3 July 1941, son of cardiologist Samy Barsoum and Souad Bidwani. He was a brilliant student and, at the age of 14 years, began medical school in Cairo, soon joined by two younger brothers, who later became a surgeon and an oncologist. Rashad graduated from the Kasr-El-Aini Medical School of Cairo University, with a bachelor's degree (MBBCh, with honours) in 1963, having collected gold medals in physiology, toxicology, and internal medi-



Rashad Sami Barsoum, 1941–2022.

cine. He undertook postgraduate training as a registrar in internal medicine at Cairo University from 1963 to 1965 and was awarded the diploma of internal medicine with distinction in 1964 and a doctorate in internal medicine in 1969. He trained in nephrology at the university from 1965 to 1967, becoming a clinical demonstrator from 1967 to 1969. He then became a clinical fellow in nephrology at the University of Paris (Hôpital Tenon) in 1971, acquiring French as one of his languages. A nephrology registrarship at the Urology Institute of London in 1972 followed, and a World Health Organisation Fellowship in renal transplantation at the University of Minnesota in 1975.

He gained membership of the Royal College of Physicians [MRCP(UK)] in 1972, was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (FRCPE) in 1982 and then the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of London (FRCP) in 1986.

Barsoum was at the forefront of bringing the latest in nephrology to Egypt. Clinically, he was key in introducing dialysis and transplantation to the country. He was founding chairman of the Cairo Kidney Centre in 1987 and the Kasr-El-Aini Nephrology and Dialysis Center in 1994, he then served as the director of the King Fahd Nephro-Urology Center from 1999 and facilitated the proliferation of several satellite centres in greater Cairo. He was appointed chairman of internal medicine at Cairo University in 1999; and served as chairman of the medical sector of Egypt's Supreme Council of Medical Universities, the National Medical Board's Central Committee, as well as other legislative and regulatory committees in the Ministries of Health and Higher Education, and the National Academy of Scientific Research and Technology.

Barsoum was an institutional builder not only in Egypt but in Africa and in the Middle East. Indeed, Barry Brenner, the distinguished American nephrologist, remembers his novel ideas to promote nephrology in Africa that opened doors. He was a founder of the Egyptian Society of Nephrology and served as its secretary general from 1981 to 1993 and president from 1996 to 1999, participating annually in its successful programmes for all his remaining years. He was the inaugural president and secretary general of the African Association of Nephrology, which now encompasses most African countries. In the Middle East, he was heavily involved in the Arab Society of Nephrology and Renal Transplantation (ASNRT), and the Middle East Society for Organ Transplantation, among others. The Egyptian Nile and State Appreciation Award and the Tarek Suhaimat Award of ASNRT were conferred on him in recognition of his contributions to the region.

Barsoum was a prolific scholar and contributed extensively to knowledge and teaching. His seminal contributions to the understanding of kidney involvement in schistosomiasis were especially noteworthy. He was the editor or coauthor of 48 international textbooks or book chapters and 206 research articles, and served as an editorial board member of 20 international journals and as a reviewer for 39. He supervised numerous doctoral and master's degrees in internal medicine, clinical pathology, biochemistry, anaesthesia, biochemical engineering, and nephrology nursing.

He held academic positions in several international organisations: as examiner for the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, after 2001; and as international advisor to the

Royal College of Physicians of London, from 2004 to 2007. He was visiting professor at several American and European universities including: the State University of New York (New York); Charles University, Prague; the Sheffield Kidney Institute, UK; Danube University Krems, Austria; the University of California, Los Angeles; Khartoum University, Sudan; and the Ministry of Health, Dubai General Hospital, United Arab Emirates. In addition, he frequently served as an examiner at universities in the region.

He was highly sought after as a compelling, well-organised, and authoritative speaker and participated prominently in some 200 congresses over 30 years, including 100 international, 60 regional, and 40 meetings in Egypt. He served as congress president, honorary president or chairman of the organising committee of eight national and international meetings; and was a keynote speaker at the Second AFRAN Congress in Nairobi, Kenya (1990), and the Eighth World Congress of Nephrology in Cape Town, South Africa (2015). His exemplary character and vast experience made him a mentor in ethical issues for numerous physicians and institutions. On his death, there was an outpouring of appreciation by his Egyptian colleagues for his lifetime contributions and guidance. His influence has been clearly articulated by friends and colleagues (and former students). Amin Roshdy Soliman observed that "Barsoum was such a great person, he will live in our memories forever; I am honoured and blessed to have known him for more than 40 years," and Adel Afifi, in his Facebook comment, recorded that "his friendship was a great treasure and his giving was limitless."

He worked hard and was intensely committed to serving globally, including as the regional officer for Africa for the International Society for Artificial Organs (ISAO) from 1988 to 1999, as a member of its publications committee (1990–1996), and as its vice-president (1990–1999). He was a member of the Board of Trustees (2001–2007) for the International Society for Hemodialysis and member of the Presidential Nominating Committee (2002, 2015). He served Kidney Disease: Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO) initiatives in various capacities: as a member of the International Board (2002–2003); of the Executive Committee (2003–2005); as member of the Board of Directors (2003–2007); chairman, Committee for Implementation in Countries Without Clinical Practice Guidelines (2003–2005); counsellor (2007–2009); member, work group on Acute Kidney Injury Clinical Practice Guideline (2007–2009); and international guidelines reviewer (from 2007). He was "keyman" for Egypt (1980–1993) for the European Dialysis and Transplantation Association (EDTA); and group member (from 1990) and press speaker

(in 1992) for the Collaborative Transplant Study Group, Heidelberg, Germany. As a member of 16 international, regional and national societies, he was awarded life-time honorary membership of the International (2009), Egyptian (2000), Lebanese (1998), and South African Societies of Nephrology (1992) and the Association of Egyptian American Scholars of North America (2012).

Barsoum was a person of many diverse interests and hobbies. At home, he was the ultimate handyman—anything electrical—he loved making things, such as security and irrigation systems, and could fix anything, whether involving plumbing, electricity or carpentry. He even made a dialysis machine all by himself early in his medical career, long before they were imported into Egypt.

He was an avid reader of both science and literature, including the novels of Dan Brown, savoured action movies, such as James Bond films, and loved classical music and Arabic songs. He loved travelling, enjoyed sampling new food and made a point of learning about the new cultures he encountered. He kept in shape by swimming regularly and had a tradition of gathering the whole family together every other year on a cruise, something everyone loved and looked forward to.

Rashad was a person of faith, as a member of St Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo. He was a close friend of the late Pope Kyrillos, who greatly influenced his life, and was a key member in the church administration. Close to his heart was the recent award of the Pope Shenouda's Award for Wisdom and Sympathy from the current pope for his service to the church.

As a fellow medical student, he met Mona Tawfik Farid—who became a consultant in psychiatry—and their loving marriage of 51 years led to an exemplary close family, with three accomplished daughters. All followed their parents into medicine: Noha (a nephrologist), Nadine (a radiologist) and Mireille (a former paediatrician and now marketing consultant) who, with their spouses Hany Farid (a radiologist) and Ramy Edward (a general surgeon), gave them five grandchildren (Alexander, Daniel, Annie, Nader, and Farida).

Rashad Barsoum died peacefully at home, surrounded by his whole family and having prepared himself in all matters. Over 2,000 people attended his funeral at St Mary's Church, showing how much he was loved and respected by everyone who knew him as a kind and compassionate man. He is remembered for his gentle, peaceful smile and his boisterous laugh. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends, colleagues, and students worldwide and mourned by the people of Egypt.

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## Disclosures

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**Saraladevi Naicker**

**University of the Witwatersrand**

**Mohamed Hany Hafez**

**Cairo University, Egypt**

**John H Dirks**

**University of Toronto and Gairdner Foundation,  
Toronto, Canada**