

Luis Blasco, Obstetrics and Gynecology

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Luis Blasco

Luis Blasco, a pioneer in infertility treatment and a professor emeritus in the department of obstetrics and gynecology in the Perelman School of Medicine and the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, died peacefully on October 23, 2023 from metastatic pancreatic cancer. He was 85.

Dr. Blasco was born in Tarragona, Spain. He received his bachelor's degree from the Colegio Maristas La Salle in Valencia, Spain, in 1956, and his medical degree from the University of Valencia in 1963. He then studied tropical diseases at the Prince Leopold Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium. After completing his studies, Dr. Blasco was hired by Unilever to work in a hospital in what is now Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo, developing an interest in pharmacology for tropical diseases. After finishing his tenure in

Africa, Dr. Blasco immigrated to the U.S. in 1967 to resume his study of tropical diseases in Penn's department of pharmacology and translational therapeutics, becoming an American citizen three years later.

At Penn, Dr. Blasco was a Ford Foundation Research Fellow in reproductive biology, working under Luigi Mastroianni and Celso-Ramon Garcia. After completing his residency in 1971, he was hired as a postdoctoral trainee in the School of Medicine's department of obstetrics and gynecology. Three years later, he joined the department's tenure track as an assistant professor. In 1986, he became a full professor, and in 1994 he became the Nancy and Richard Wolfson Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology (*Almanac* March 29, 1994 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v40pdf/n27/032994.pdf>)). "Dr. Blasco is a superb clinician and educator, and most deserving of this munificent endowment," said Michael T. Mennuti, then the chair of the department of obstetrics and gynecology. "His expertise and contributions in andrology place Luis among a small group of reproductive endocrinologists who are nationally and internationally recognized as leaders in this field."

Dr. Blasco conducted pivotal research at Penn, co-leading a NIH grant for Penn's Reproductive Medicine Unit and serving on the Penn in vitro fertilization team that performed one of the earliest IVF pregnancies in the U.S. He was a member of the American Board of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Society of Reproductive Surgeons, the Society of Reproductive Endocrinologists, the American Fertility Society, and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. He was also a part of the Spanish, Colombian, Chilean and Mexican societies of obstetrics and gynecology. He lectured internationally and wrote numerous book chapters and peer-reviewed articles. At Penn, Dr. Blasco was an involved faculty member, serving on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. He retired from Penn in 2005 and took emeritus status.

While living in the U.S., Dr. Blasco remained close with his extended family in Valencia, Spain, and, in addition to frequent trips there, he traveled throughout Europe, Central and South America, and Asia. He was an active tennis and soccer player and, during his retirement years, was active in Philadelphia's Germantown Cricket Club. "To his friends and family alike, Luis was always highly active, intensely competitive, passionate, and always authentic," said his family in a tribute. "He will be dearly missed."

Dr. Blasco is survived by his sons Ian and Trevor, who he raised with his late wife, Marjeanne (Mimi) Collins Blasco, who was an emeritus associate professor of pediatrics at Penn (*Almanac* November 3, 2020 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/articles/marjeanne-collins-psomchop-and-student-health-services>)), and his grandchildren Colin, Tate, Caroline, and Javier. He is also survived by his second wife Joann Fisher and her daughter Samantha.