

Michael Simson, Medicine

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Michael Simson

Michael Byron Simson, the Samuel Bellet Associate Professor in the department of cardiology in internal medicine at the Perelman School of Medicine, passed away on September 14. He was 77.

Dr. Simson earned a BA in 1966 and an MD in 1970, both at Harvard. In 1971, he joined the faculty of Penn's School of Medicine as an assistant instructor in medicine. Four years later, he was promoted to research associate in the department of cardiology, and the next year he became an assistant professor. In 1977, Dr. Simson accepted the secondary post of assistant professor of physiology in the department of animal biology at Penn Vet, where he conducted research that involved animals as models of human disease in order to study fundamental mechanisms in rhythm disorders of the heart. Dr. Simson continued to rise through the

ranks, becoming an associate professor of cardiovascular medicine at Penn's School of Medicine in 1983. The next year, he was named the Samuel Bellet Associate Professor of Medicine in the department of cardiology (*Almanac* February 21, 1984 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v30pdf/n23/022184.pdf>)), a position he held until his retirement and assumption of emeritus status in 2021. Beginning in 1976, he also had a secondary appointment in animal biology in Penn Vet.

Dr. Simson was a leading researcher and specialist in rhythm disorders of the heart. As early as 1977, he won the American College of Cardiology's Young Investigator Award for his work with Wenckebach Arrhythmia. In the early 1980s, he invented an electrocardiograph instrument that was designed to alert doctors of ventricular tachycardia, a condition of life-threatening periods of excessively rapid heartbeats that occurs after heart attacks. This instrument was patented and mass-manufactured. In 1985, Dr. Simson received a grant from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute to study this disease.

Dr. Simson is survived by his wife, Sharon Pastor Simson; his son, Michael D. Simson (Jennifer); a grandson; his siblings, Mary Ann Phillips, William C. Simson, and Susan Pittman; and many nieces and nephews. Services and interment were private. Send contributions in Dr. Simson's memory to Kitty Cottage Adoption Center at www.kittycottage.org (<http://www.kittycottage.org>).