
Life Story

Alain Justin Marengo-Rowe was an extraordinary man. He was born in Cairo, Egypt, to Adrian and Lelia Marengo. Being from French-Italian parentage, he grew up speaking both French and Italian. He did not learn to speak English, until age 11, when his family moved to Ireland. After his parents divorced, Lelia remarried an English Royal Air Force (RAF) serviceman, Isaac (Ike) Rowe. The family moved first to South Africa and then Ike was offered a posting in Ireland. Lelia and Ike had two other children, Ann and Anthony (Nino). In a very unselfish gesture, Ike Rowe took on Adrian Marengo's surname also, so all the children would have the same surname. Alain Marengo became Alain Marengo-Rowe.

His fondest childhood memories are of his grandmother Evelina "Eva" Santagata, who owned and ran the family tile factory in Cairo, until it was nationalized in 1949. When he was 6 years old, Eva gave him an ultimatum: "Alain, you have two choices. When you grow up, you can be either be a priest or a doctor." The die was cast!

At age 13, Alain entered St. Boniface Catholic College, a boarding school in Plymouth, England. Just like Harry Potter's Hogwarts, the school was divided into houses. Alain was "Head Boy." He used to travel through the tunnels of the old buildings and pull all kinds of tricks with his housemates. It was in Plymouth where he met a pretty young girl, Rachel Cutler. After a long courtship, they were married in 1960, on the Island of Malta. Their first child, Josephine Anne was born in December 1960, in London.

After obtaining his medical degree from the University of London at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, England, he served as a House-Officer in Orthopedics to Sir Reginald Watson Jones. He entered his surgical internship in November, 1961 followed by an Internship in Internal Medicine at Plymouth General Hospital in Devon, England. Over the years he advanced to residency and higher qualifications in Internal Medicine, Pathology, Hematology and Transfusion Medicine. Also included were night duties in Microbiology, Hematology, Blood Banking and Biochemistry. In response to the question "why so many specialties?" he responded "it was all so very interesting that I did not know when to stop." While living in Plymouth, Alain and Rachel's second child Adrian John was born, in March 1963.

Alain went on to hold positions at both The University of Cambridge and The University of Oxford. While at Cambridge, he was attached to the Medical Research Council (MRC) Unit for Abnormal Hemoglobin Research.

As a commissioned officer in the Royal Air Force, he served in Southern Arabia for three years during the Yemeni revolt under the tutelage of 1962 Nobel Prize Winner in Chemistry Dr. Max Perutz, Professor Herman Lehmann, Air Marshal W.P. Stamm and Arthur E. Mourant. While stationed in Aden, he discovered two new hemoglobins and defined blood group frequencies in Southern Arabia. In the MRC Unit, he became known as "Our man in Arabia" and was involved in several research projects pertaining to "Arabia Felix". On his return to England, he was appointed lecturer to the Department of Hematology at Oxford University. Under the guidance of Dr. Rosemary Riggs and Dr. Alan Sharp, he eventually returned to the "bleeding group." In January 1969, their third child Jessica Jane, was born in Oxford.

Alain and his family, immigrated to the United States in 1970. He was recruited as an Associate Professor of Pathology, to the University of Texas Medical School in San Antonio. It was 1970, in San Antonio Texas, where his fourth child, Justine Rachel, was born.

In 1972, the family relocated to Dallas, Texas. Alain held Senior Positions at the University of Texas Medical School in San Antonio and Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. He contributed over 100 articles to medical literature. All four of his children attended the University of Texas in Austin. He has eight grandchildren. Through the years he has been an avid sailor, African big-game hunter in the Congo, Sudan and Zimbabwe and a marathon runner. He remains most grateful to Sir Reginald Watson-Jones, Professor Hermann Lehman, Air Marshall W.P. Stamm and Dr. George Race, who managed to "infect" him with the love of learning.

In addition to serving as Director of the Special Hematology Department, the Blood Bank and the Coagulation Unit, Alain maintained a busy private practice. His skills and expertise took on rapidly increasing importance in the 1980s and 1990s, as new threats to the blood supply emerged. His ability to convey complex concepts in ways easy for anyone to understand made him highly sought after on the lecture circuit and as an expert witness. His bedside manner allowed him to ease the suffering of thousands of patients. Throughout his career he epitomized the Hippocratic Oath.

Since retiring from Baylor in 2006, he lived at his lake house, outside of Dallas between annual visits to Europe and Australia. He died at his home with his beloved dog JJ and family by his side.
