

## ABCP Beyond the Pump - Steve Sutton, CCP, LP

William Riley, MS, CCP, LP and Scott Noesges, CCP, LP

Steve Sutton truly embodies the most-sincere version of the phrase, “a gentleman and a scholar”. Those who know Steve may not know his personal and family history, which made him the man he is today. For those of you who do not know Steve, it’s impossible for written dialogue to adequately describe the positivity and warmth of his presence.



Texas Heart Institute 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The School of Perfusion Technology June, 2022.  
(L-R) Doug and Penny Thompson (classmates), SS, Bill Dunn, and Warren Goodwin.

Steve was born in Dallas, Texas, a hair past the middle of the last century at Baylor Medical University Center (BUMC); where he would eventually spend 36 years of his professional life. Steve was an exceptionally talented dual sport athlete growing up, balancing the roles of quarterback and first baseman into his collegiate years. He began his journey in pulmonary medicine at BUMC in 1974 and learned of the field of Perfusion while operating an IL-113 blood gas machine during a heart surgery procedure. His earliest influences were Guy Prater and Jay B. Denman, followed by a very lengthy “who’s who” of the founders of Perfusion in Texas in the early 1980s.



Intraoperative photograph, O.R. 1 at Texas Heart Institute, 1981.  
SS a senior student background and Warren Goodwin operating the  
Sarns 5000 HLM and Shiley S100-A bubble oxygenator.

Steve enrolled in the Texas Heart Institute School of Perfusion in 1981 and performed over 500 cases as a junior student. His first case was a triple valve, and some of his most memorable cases from the decades to follow were with the same surgeon, Dr. Denton Cooley. Steve was present operating the Sci-Med ECMO oxygenator and Bentley BOS-10 bubble oxygenator with staff perfusionists Chris Clay and Bill Dunn for the second ever Akutusu total artificial heart procedure, and subsequent bridge to heart transplant with Dr. Cooley.

Aside from his purely clinical endeavors, Steve spent many years as an AmSECT Regional Officer, has held multiple posts within the AACP and participated in numerous Texas Heart Institute programs. Steve has traveled to Hammersmith Hospital in London, and The Australia-New Zealand College of Perfusion, along with numerous scientific programs and conferences worldwide. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Texas Heart Institute School of Perfusion, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of John Gibbon's development of the HLM, and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lillehei's Cross Circulation were events he will cherish forever. He is particularly proud of his conference involvement with the Cooley Society of Cardiovascular Surgeon.



AACP Annual Seminar 2022, Austin, Texas.  
(L-R) Scott Noesges, O.H. "Bud" Frazier, and SS.

Steve is a voracious researcher. He reflects on his relatives and ancestors as if they each hold a special place in his history and his heart – because they clearly do. His 91-year old mother is of Czech and German descent, and he describes his late father as 4<sup>th</sup> generation ***“TEXAN”*** (all caps, italics, and bold-type 100% on purpose) with roots in the Carolinas. European ancestors on both

sides of Steve's family held positions of honor and distinction. Steve grew up in a *"home filled with love and discipline"*. One major personal influence is his late brother who passed away at 15 years in June 1966. He had Tetralogy of Fallot and underwent palliative Left and Right Blalock-Taussig-Thomas Shunts in 1952 and 1958.

If there is one aspect of Steve's life which he holds nearer and dearer than perfusion, is his family. He and his wife Eve will celebrate their 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in February 2023. They have two children, a daughter who is a Hospital Chaplain and a son who works in Hospice and Wellness Sales and Services, both loving their chosen careers. When Steve is not transporting ECMO or engaging in *"research ad nauseum delving into the history of humanity and perfusion science"*; Steve enjoys hunting, ranching, and caring for his property.



AACP Annual Seminar, Reno, Nevada.

(L-R) SS, Eve Sutton, Tom Thelin, Jill Palanzo, and David Palanzo.

When asked about his own perfusion legacy, Steve humbly responded, *"Wow! That's typically something you prefer others establish. I think an undying desire to never stop learning, teaching, and giving back where possible to advance perfusion science. Additionally, a memory of physiology and case experiences that are filed above for recall "on the fly."*

Having known Steve for well over two decades now, perhaps the most telling statement from our interview came as a reply when asked what advice he would give to a new perfusion school graduate – *"Be patient with yourself, emerging in the period when caseloads are down and*

*never cease to gain experience, ask questions, learn, and possess thick skin. Take nothing personal (if possible) and don't have the desire to not let the door hit you on the backside. Stay and learn. Having said all of that, keep a happy home life and enjoy your career, it is highly stressful and you need balance in life away from work which makes you glad to return and be active in your profession, WE Need You!*