



## Alexander Ilija Klashnya

August 13, 1931 - June 16, 2021

Klashnya, Dr. Alexander Ilija Dr. Alexander Ilija Klashnya, our "Sasha" "Lala" "Lali" "funny-man," born August 13, 1931 in Sremska Mitrovica, Yugoslavia, died on June 16, 2021 at home, of what some might describe as a series of strokes but what we are quite certain was a broken heart after losing his beloved wife Radmilla only six months ago, after sixty-five years of marriage. Sasha is survived by his sister Mira Petrovic, daughters Ena (Dave) Carroll and Maya (Peter) Tester, five precious granddaughters, Maya (Brett) Baudinet, Ellie (Ed) Newman, Annalisa (Joe) Tester, Kristina (Eric) Chien, and Frances Carroll, two darling great-grandsons, Blake and Jackson, niece Jelena Mladenovic, grand-niece and namesake Sasha Mladenovic and grand-nephew Andrija Mladenovic. These people were the center of his life and brought him the greatest joy. His devotion, love and support for us was deep and unwavering. Sasha will be remembered first and foremost for his smile, which came easily, lit up a room and won him the attention of Radmilla when they met in medical school at the University of Belgrade. He graduated with his M.D. and specialization in Immunology in 1956 and in 1968 worked on groundbreaking development of the measles vaccine in Cleveland, Ohio. To his last days, he followed with great interest the development of the Covid-19 vaccine. He repeated his residency, internship and specialization four years later when they moved their young family to the United States, determined to give their children every opportunity for happiness. This time he specialized in pathology and often quipped, "You don't have to be an introvert to be a

pathologist, but it helps!" He was an introvert and a quirky, gentle man, who marched to the beat of his own drum and had many ideas that were ahead of their time. He watched his cholesterol decades before anyone else started mentioning it and followed a strict diet, making gallons of his own fat-free yogurt and baking his own delicious, secret recipe bread --- loaves and loaves, piping hot and always waiting for his granddaughters when they visited. He exercised religiously his whole life, often in his red Speedo, long before the full benefits of moving our bodies were appreciated. He loved all nature shows and, as a 20 year volunteer at the Mote Marine Aquarium, brainstormed solutions to the Red Tide that was killing so much marine life. He loved his routine and his solitude, poring over, underlining and clipping his Scientific Americans and medical journals. A lifelong learner, he was never afraid of starting a project that he knew nothing about because he was confident he could improvise and make it work. Sasha measured success not by degrees and awards but by the strength of one's family relationships; he modeled and instilled that value in each of his descendants and was never happier than at our loud and raucous family gatherings. He was so relieved when "his girls" brought into the fold men he respected and liked, and his granddaughters all brought him boundless joy with their individual personalities and relationships with him. There was nothing he would not do for us. He was the gentlest splinter remover, patient homework helper, earnest castle maker, supporter of all our endeavors whether he understood them or not. He was an avid tennis player, still playing at age 86, and Djokovic super-fan. To his very last days, he dreamed of hitting a tennis ball again. We love you, Lala, and honor your spirit, life and legacy. In lieu of flowers a memorial may be made to So Others May Learn, his granddaughter's nonprofit organization furthering the education of motivated young students in southern Africa. [soothersmaylearn.org](http://soothersmaylearn.org) He always believed education was the greatest gift one could give their children.