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Zoom On: Alain Cribier, Pioneering Interventional Cardiologist



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Prof. Alain Cribier, MD, MD, FACC, FESC has been Chief of Cardiology at the University Hospital Charles Nicolle of Rouen, France for 20 years. He became widely recognised for having developed new interventional technologies for the treatment of valvular heart diseases: balloon aortic valvuloplasty in 1985, mitral commissurotomy in 1994, and, after 15 years of research, transcatheter implantation of aortic valves (TAVI), performing the first world case in Rouen in 2002. This last breakthrough technology, which is now widely used in the world with more than 300,000 patients treated and an explosive growth will have a durable impact on the pattern of medical practice.

Prof. Cribier has received a number of prestigious scientific distinctions and awards for his pioneering work, most recently the Gold Medal of the [European Society of Cardiology](#). He has published more than 600 indexed articles in the fields of interventional cardiology, valve disease and innovative technologies. He is now Emeritus Professor and Medical Director of the Rouen Normandy Medical Training Centre.

1. What are your key areas of interest and research?

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Developing new technologies in interventional cardiology, in the field of valvular heart diseases (mitral and aortic valve stenosis), to address important unmet clinical needs. My key area has been the development of transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVI), consisting of replacing the aortic valve without cardiac surgery, which was achieved after 15 years of pre- and post-clinical research.

2. What are the major challenges in your field?

All the multiple challenges associated with innovation. Among them: convincing myself, the experts, the medical community, and the public health services of the relevance of the innovation in the matter of patient benefit, safety and cost-effectiveness; finding partners and funding; validating the therapy by rigorous trials. The move from the concept to wide acceptance of the technology has always been in my field a long bumpy road.

3. What is your top management tip?

Three words: Conviction, energy, perseverance.

4. What would you single out as a career highlight?

The first non-surgical implantation of a prosthetic aortic heart valve, performed on April 16, 2002 with my team in Rouen after 10 years of research, a procedure considered by all experts as technically impossible and clinically irrelevant. It turned out to be a revolutionary life-saving procedure, with 300,000 cases performed worldwide since then.

5. If you had not chosen this career path what do you think you would have become?

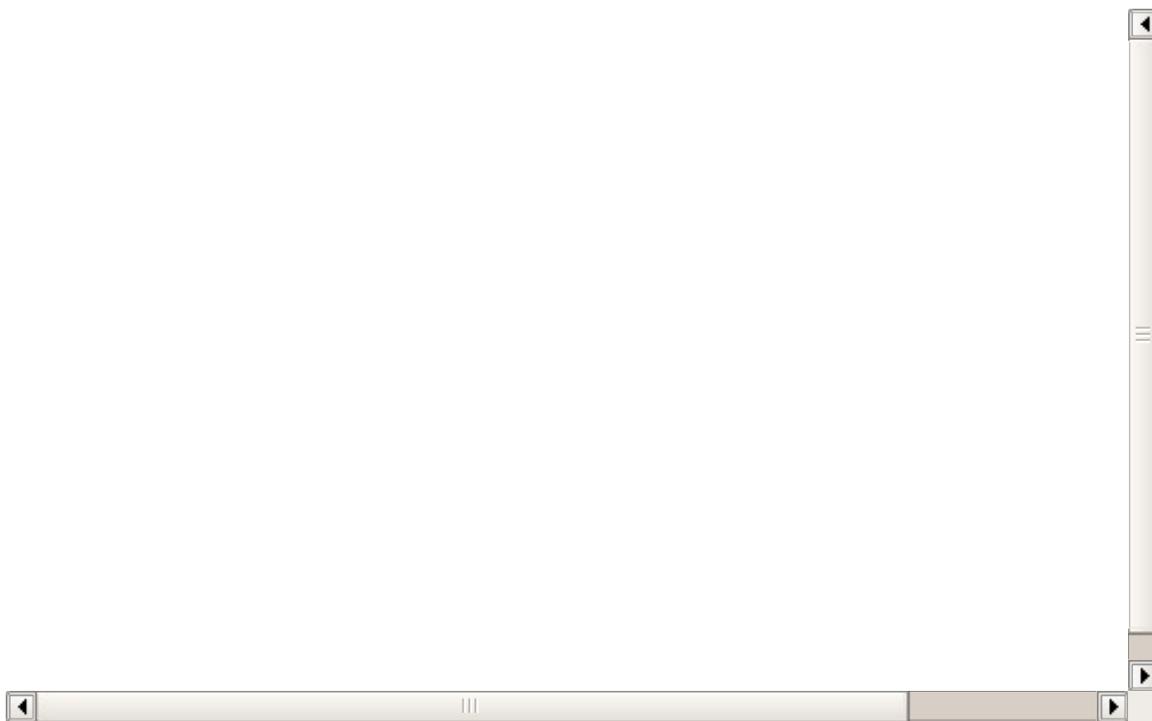
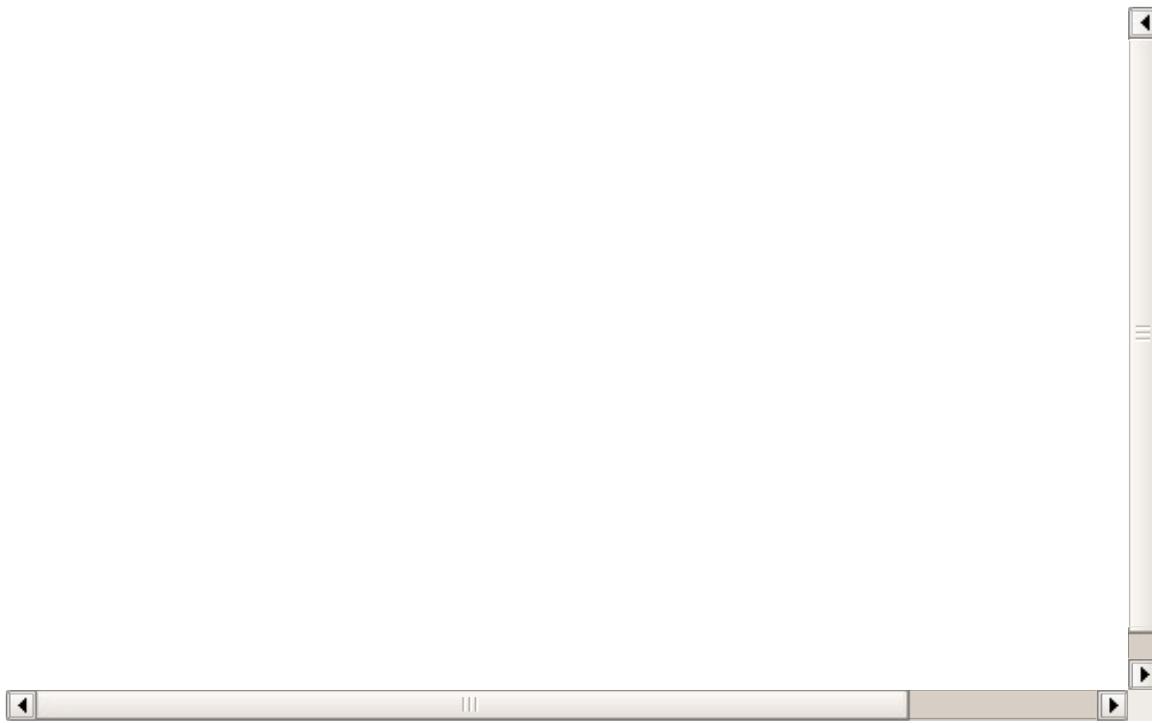
Probably a musician and likely a pianist.

6. What are your personal interests outside of work?

Piano playing (classical), painting, reading and enjoying life with my relatives.

7. Your favourite quote?

“Don’t undertake a project unless it is manifestly important and nearly impossible.” [Edwin Land](#).



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