

# Co-workers recall kindness of doctor killed in bike wreck



Dr. Elliot Rampulla was the physician at the Wellness and Pain Treatment Center on Queen City Avenue in Tuscaloosa. He specialized in pain management.

By Stephanie Taylor Staff Writer

Published: Thursday, September 9, 2010 at 3:30 a.m.

Last Modified: Wednesday, September 8, 2010 at 11:38 p.m.

TUSCALOOSA | A Tuscaloosa doctor on an early morning bike ride was killed when a car struck him near the BFGoodrich plant Wednesday morning.

Dr. Elliot Rampulla, 66, was killed in the accident, which police said occurred just before daylight.

Tuscaloosa County Metro Homicide Unit commander Capt. Loyd Baker said Rampulla was heading from 21st Street to the Black Warrior Parkway by the plant when he was struck by a driver heading northbound.

The driver of the car stopped for about two minutes, Baker said, before continuing along the parkway. He may have sustained head injuries when he struck the cyclist, he said. The driver veered into the wrong lane and drove through several yards before crossing a ditch and hitting a pole. He was seriously injured and was being treated at [DCH](#) Regional Medical Center on Wednesday. His name was not released.

It appeared that the cyclist was about to turn left and head south, Baker said. The road is along the most popular route among cyclists in Tuscaloosa. Rampulla was a member of the Druid City Bicycle Club and competed in triathalons as a hobby.

Rampulla was the physician at the Wellness and Pain Treatment Center on Queen City Avenue in Tuscaloosa. He specialized in pain management, or anesthesiology. He graduated from Wake Forest University School of Medicine in 1972.

Office manager Debra Hughes had worked for Rampulla since 2002.

“He was always laughing and joking,” she said. “He was very dedicated to his parents and just a very caring man.”

She said that Rampulla’s patients suffer from chronic pain and others were receiving treatment for drug addiction. Because of the nature of their problems, he saw patients often on a monthly basis and developed good relationships with them, she said.

The mood among office staff was somber Wednesday afternoon. An employee attached a black ribbon to the front door as patients came in and heard the news.

One patient left the office in tears.

“He was a good doctor. He was personal with you,” said the woman, who declined to give her name.

Several doctors have volunteered to treat Rampulla’s patients who had appointments this week, Hughes said.

Receptionist Jan Strickland has worked at the office for four weeks after being unemployed since November.

She began as a temporary worker six weeks ago when Rampulla moved his office from Jack Warner Parkway to Queen City Avenue.

“He decided to give me a job after that. He was a great man, good to all of us and to his patients,” she said. “He had a good heart.”