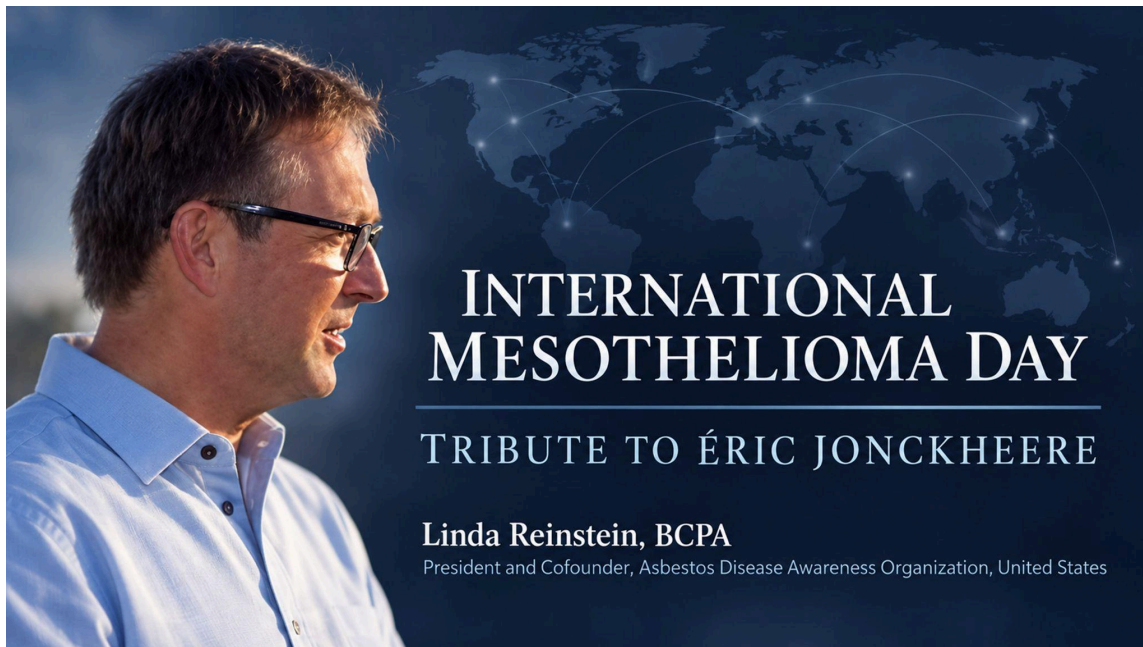


INTERNATIONAL MESOTHELIOMA DAY - TRIBUTE TO ÉRIC JONCKHEERE

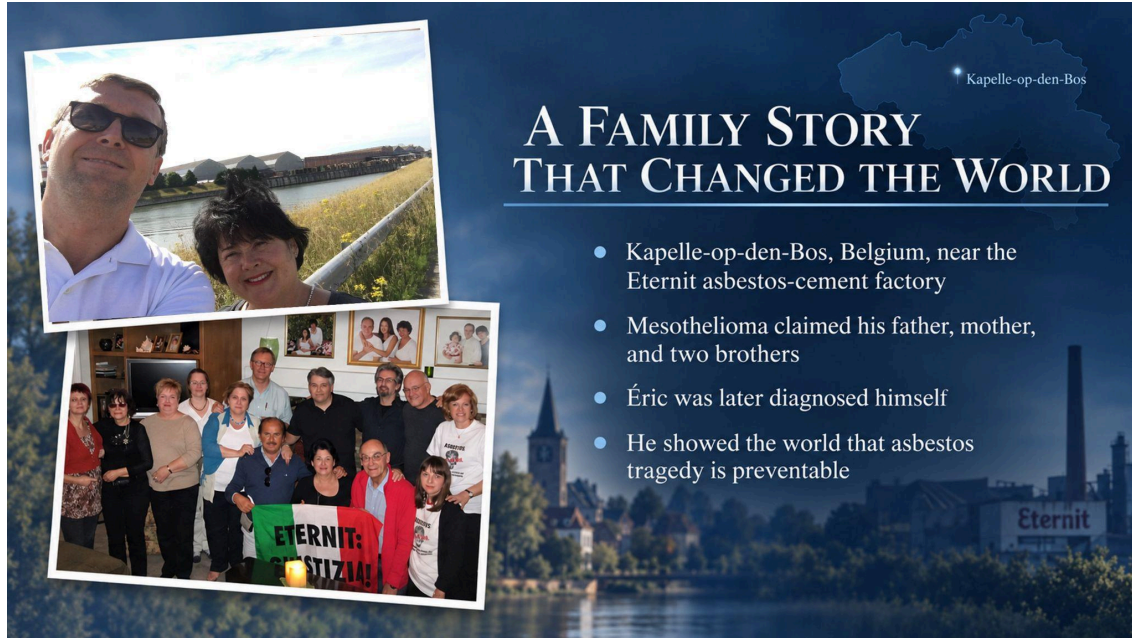
Linda Reinstein, BCPA

President and Cofounder, Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO), United States



1. **Éric connected personal loss to a global public health movement.**

Éric Jonckheere understood that asbestos disease is intensely personal, but the struggle to prevent it must be international. Multiple family members endured devastating asbestos-related disease, yet he transformed that experience into education, advocacy, and collaboration across borders. That is one reason Éric meant so much to those of us in the United States. Because my husband, Alan Reinstein, was diagnosed with mesothelioma in 2003 and died in 2006, Éric and I shared the belief that science and statistics establish the magnitude of the problem, but personal stories explain why prevention cannot wait.



A FAMILY STORY THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

- Kapelle-op-den-Bos, Belgium, near the Eternit asbestos-cement factory
- Mesothelioma claimed his father, mother, and two brothers
- Éric was later diagnosed himself
- He showed the world that asbestos tragedy is preventable

2. The United States illustrates how long the consequences of asbestos persist.

The last asbestos mine in the United States closed in **2002**, ending more than 110 years of domestic production. Yet the United States had used approximately **31.5 million metric tons of asbestos between 1900 and 2003**, leaving an enormous legacy in homes, schools, workplaces, infrastructure, and other buildings ([USGS](#)). Today, EPA cites asbestos exposure as being linked to **more than 40,000 deaths in the United States each year**, including deaths from mesothelioma, lung cancer, ovarian cancer, and laryngeal cancer ([US EPA](#)). These numbers demonstrate a lesson Éric understood well: ending mining or reducing current use does not erase the disease burden created by decades of exposure. Long latency periods, legacy asbestos, and more contribute to the continuous death toll.



3. **In 2024, the United States took a landmark regulatory step, but the work remains unfinished.**

In March 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized its **Part 1 chrysotile asbestos rule**, prohibiting ongoing uses of chrysotile, the only form of asbestos then known to be imported, processed, or distributed for current use in the United States. EPA described the rule as a major milestone under the strengthened Toxic Substances Control Act ([US EPA](#)). But it is not a comprehensive statutory ban on all asbestos, and the rule has been challenged in federal court. Oral argument in **Texas Chemistry Council v. EPA, No. 24-60193**, was held before the Fifth Circuit on **June 1, 2026** ([Fifth Circuit Court](#)). Progress, as Éric knew, must often be won, defended, and advanced again.

AN INTERNATIONAL VOICE FOR JUSTICE

- President of ABEVA, the Belgian Association of Asbestos Victims
- Worked for justice, accountability, compensation, and prevention
- Believed asbestos knows no borders
- Strengthened global collaboration and awareness



Eric Jonckheere

Amiante STOP Asbest ABEVA

European Asbestos Forum

With Linda in India

Asian Asbestos Conference 2009 (AAC)

Strengthening Asbestos Movement in Asia

26-28/11/2009 Hong Kong

Ban Asbestos Network Japan

WE WANT ASBESTOS-FREE LIFE

DIFFERENT PEOPLES A STRONGER TOMORROW

PEOPLE PLACES A SAFER TOMORROW

4. **Legacy asbestos remains one of America's most difficult challenges.**

EPA's **Part 2 risk evaluation**, finalized in November 2024, examined legacy uses and associated disposal, including asbestos still present in materials such as floor and ceiling tiles, pipe wrap, insulation, and other older products. EPA determined that asbestos presents an **unreasonable risk to human health** ([US EPA](https://www.epa.gov/asbestos/unreasonable-risk-human-health)). This is where Éric's experience in Belgium and ours in the United States converge so clearly: asbestos installed decades ago can continue exposing workers, families, and communities today.

5. **That is why we continue working for ARBAN.**

The **Alan Reinstein Ban Asbestos Now Act** represents our continuing effort to establish comprehensive federal protections in the United States. For me, the legislation is personal because it carries Alan's name, but its purpose is far larger. It represents workers, survivors, families, and communities seeking durable prevention through law. Éric understood this progression: personal experience leads to awareness; awareness must be supported by science; and science must ultimately inform prevention, regulation, and legislation.

ERIC'S MISSION REMAINS WITH US



- He turned personal experience into education
- Education into prevention and action
- A U.S. asbestos ban and a global end to asbestos use, exposure, and disease

Prevention protects the next worker, child, and family. Éric, we remember you. We honor you. We will continue the work we shared.

6. **Éric also understood that international solidarity is essential.**

That principle is central to ADAO's **Global Asbestos Awareness Week** each **April**, our **Shared Stories**, and **Mesothelioma Awareness Month** and **Mesothelioma Awareness Day in September**. These initiatives connect people across countries and generations. They allow a family in Belgium to recognize the experience of a family in the United States, Japan, Italy, France, or elsewhere. They also remind us that statistics are composed of individual lives.

7. **Just days ago, our 21st Asbestos Awareness and Prevention Conference brought those principles together.**

Scientists, physicians, labor representatives, attorneys, survivors, families, and advocates gathered around the theme **“Asbestos: Awareness, Prevention, and the Law.”** The discussions moved from science and disease to legacy asbestos, public policy, litigation, legislation, and the voices of those directly affected. Holding the conference during Mesothelioma Awareness Month, with the academic program on **Mesothelioma Awareness Day**, reinforced the connection between evidence and human experience.



8. **Éric's legacy is part of the work we continue in the United States.**

He helped us because he showed how one family's tragedy could become international advocacy, how one patient's voice could educate governments and communities, and how relationships across borders could strengthen everyone working for prevention.

For me, Éric's greatest lesson was that **none of us should fight asbestos alone**. His story became advocacy. His advocacy became collaboration. And his collaboration helped strengthen a global movement.

The most meaningful tribute we can offer Éric is to continue that work: **share the evidence, tell the stories, defend public health protections, advance comprehensive bans, and work across borders until asbestos-caused disease is finally prevented.**