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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to start off with a statement in which I truly believe: “You can become anything you want in life, only if you put your mind to it”. Over the past years, I have put my mind into becoming a cardiothoracic surgeon in training; aiming to eventually develop myself as a skilful and successful Cardiothoracic Surgeon. This journey also enabled me to contribute scientifically and work on my Ph.D. thesis. Therefore, having completed my Ph.D. thesis in the field of myocardial revascularisation makes me extremely proud and grateful. Herewith, I would like to thank all of you that encouraged and supported, contributed to my scientific and clinical cardiothoracic surgery journey and provided me with important life-lessons along the way.

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of working as a medical doctor in cardiothoracic surgery. During this rotation I applied for a position as resident not in training. I prepared myself well by dressing up in a suit and tie, brought some letters of recommendation, printed out my CV and thought of all the hard questions that you could ask me. However, during a brief and informal conversation you ensured me that by being “well-prepared and dressed in a suit and tie” you had to hire me! Exciting months as resident not in training in the operating theater and at the department followed, after which I started my Ph.D. trajectory. During this trajectory you supervised my Ph.D. process, reviewed some of my manuscripts and fulfilled a crucial role in the regulatory process of the SYNTAXES study. Thank you very much for your guidance, advice and assistance during my medical career.

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During my Ph.D. I had the privilege to have my desk located at various locations inside the Erasmus MC building. Starting in the BD-hallway of the “historical” Thoraxcentre, moving to the “basement” in the Z-flat and ending in the new, incredibly “practical”, office in the RG building (a.k.a. de “kantoortuin”). Besides seeing lots of new faces passing by every day in the “kantoortuin”, it was there that I also realized that I cannot imagine a well-functioning department without a proper working back-office that coordinates and manages a lot of the “behind the scenes” cardio-

thoracic hassle. Therefore, I would also like to thank the CTC back-office colleagues from the “kantooruin”; **Wilma, Jos, Maureen, Caroline, Solita, Titia and Maaïke.**

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I am blessed to have so many friends surrounding me. Close friends with whom I can celebrate special, and also not so special, occasions with; friends that support me in my decisions and ambitions; friends that can also be critical and allow me to reconsider my thoughts and actions; friends with whom I can share emotional moments with; with whom I can laugh and cry, and friends with whom I can go on our traditional yearly surf-trip! Thanks to all my **buddies** for being there, and I am looking forward to all the great and exciting parties, drinks, diners, surf trips and personal victories yet to come! My special thanks go out to **Jens** and **Yaar**, my “promovendi partners-in-crime”. I am proud to have you both at my side during my PhD defense as paranymphs We know each other since the beginning of our medical career and luckily we have spent much time together both inside as outside the hospital. Our trip to Costa Rica was definitely the highlight! I hope we stay friends, colleagues and doctors for life!

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Although times might have been challenging the last couple of years, you remain positive, keep looking for opportunities and never stop developing and believing in yourself. I am exceptionally proud of you and I love you!

Moreover, I am very lucky to have an awesome brother and sister! It is great to realize that I can learn a lot from you both! **Annique**, the way you blast through life, fully committed to everything you do, and you do a lot, a whole lot! Working hard, yet enjoying life even harder. Exploring all continents, riding your motorbike, meeting new people, planning to learn kite-surfing, it seems that there are no limitations to your capabilities Although choosing what to do first seems challenging sometimes, you inspire me with your enthusiasm and living life to the fullest. I love you! **Wieger**, my “younger” brother, I look up to you my friend! I am very proud to call you my brother, and I believe that you should be very proud of who you are today and all that you have accomplished over the years. Since a couple of years, I can no longer see you as my “little” brother, since you are a full-grown man that now runs his own business. You have shown to be a thoughtful, ambitious, loyal, caring and one hell of a good friend to me! Keep up your head, walk with your chest

forward and chin up, “grab life by the balls” and be incredibly proud of yourself, each and every day. You deserve that! I love you!

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Ps. I truly believe that you will be the best mother in the world for our **baby boy**! Exciting times are up ahead and I cannot wait to see what the future has to bring for as a family! Simone, ik heb je lief!