

INTRODUCTION

It is a great satisfaction for me to do the presentation of this volume, which central topic is the Paediatric Surgery, which is in coincidence with the celebration of 40th anniversary of the opening of this Service in the Central Military Hospital.

This young speciality established in America approximately a century ago, since William Ladd decided to devote his life for the attention of children's surgical pathologies, after having seen the devastating effect on the small patients of the explosion that occurred in the port of Halifax, New Scotland - Canada, in 1917. In that occasion two ships: the Mont Blanc (that was completely loaded with ammunitions towards France) and the Imo, which was going towards New York, tragically collide in the historical frame of the First World War. Indeed, this clash has been the non-nuclear explosion of greatest magnitude in the history of the humanity.

Doctor Ladd was nominated Chief of Surgery of the Children's Hospital of the City of Boston in 1927, post taken later by Robert Gross, his disciple in the year of 1947. Both of them revolutionised the attention of children with surgical pathologies, that before their time, were condemned to die. Dr Ladd pioneered in the managing of the intestinal malrotation in esophageal atresia, anorectal malformations, correction of biliary atresia and the management of Wilms` tumor among many other anomalies. Dr Gross was a pillar of the cardiovascular surgery in the world. He successfully managed the first paediatric patient with persistent *ductus arteriosus*; he also used vascular homograft for the first time and was decisive in the recognition of paediatric surgery as a speciality.

Nowadays more than 80 % of the Paediatric Surgeons of the United States and Canada have academic direct-ascending line with the Children's Hospital of Boston and with Doctors Ladd and Gross. It is a must to say that Colombia is not the exception. So, by 1960 Doctor Bernardo Ochoa Arizmendi, a Paediatric Surgeon, returned to Medellin, initiating the Service of Surgery at the Children's Hospital San Vicente de Paul. It was with him that the pioneers of paediatric surgery of Manizales, Cali and Pasto were trained: Doctors Edgar Cantillo, Antonio Duque and Jorge Hidalgo, respectively.

Bogotá received Doctor Efraim Bonilla Arciniegas, returning to *Hospital de la Misericordia*, in 1962. He was trained in Paediatric Surgery by the Colonel MD Jesus Lozoya Solís, in turn disciple of Robert Gross in Boston. He was commissioned to create the surgical department of this Institution and the programme of Paediatric Surgery at *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*. At that moment the surgeons of this Centre were Doctors Jorge Arturo Silva, Gabriel Rozo Rojas and Juan Jiménez Fonseca, the latter Official of Health of the Army.

In 1968, with the support of the director of the Central Military Hospital, Colonel-MD Jose David Rojas Franky and for recommendation of Doctor Alfonso Bonilla Naar, who in turn had received approval from a commission integrated by Doctors Emilio Posada Sarmiento, Chief of the Department of Pediatrics, Hernando Galvis Espinosa, Chief of the Department of Surgery and Roberto Gonzalez Arango, Chief of the Service of Surgery Rooms, the Service of Paediatric Surgery was created and Major-MD Juan Jiménez Fonseca was appointed as its first director. The Military hospital was the first General Hospital of the country that organized a service of this type for benefit of the children of the members of the Military Forces and of the community in general. Due to health problems, Doctor Fonseca left prematurely this post on August 30, 1971, being remembered for his professionalism, dedication and love towards his patients. The flags were gathered by the Doctor Gabriel Rozo Rojas, who received his training in Paediatric Surgery in Hospital de la Misericordia, as it was already mentioned, together with Doctor Mizrahinn Méndez, under the supervisin of Doctor Bonilla Arciniegas, after the first mentioned ones finished their studies of General Surgery in *Hospital San*

Juan de Dios. Dr. Rozo directed the service for 27 years, during which it reached many achievements, which would make this presentation endless. Nevertheless I want to rise out some of the most significant ones: his active participation in the growth and consolidation of the Colombian Society of Paediatric Surgery, founded in 1963 of which he occupied all its managerial charges; his contributions to the Colombian Association of Scientific Societies acting as a secretary of this organization for several years; his active participation in the Pan-American Society of Paediatric Surgery, of which he was his president in 1988; his role as Vicedean of the Medicine Faculty, Military University "Nueva Granada" for almost three years; the creation of the program of specialization in Paediatric Surgery of the Military University, which was the first one in being recognized by ICFES through the resolution 312 of 13 December, 1984. To date, 16 surgeons have got their degrees as pediatricians from this program, and who nowadays work as such through out of the country. it is also worth to highlighting Dr. Rozo`s contribution towards the creation of this speciality in *Cajas de Compensation Cafam and Colsubsidio* at the end of 70`s in, which have had a paramount role in the attention of the children in Colombia.

It may be that the most important legacy of the Doctor Rozo is the example of professionalism, delivery, dedication and respect that he inculcated and continues promoting in all of us, who have had the fortune of being his alumni, these characteristics have been the conductive thread of the Paediatric Surgery from the time of Dr. Ladd to the present day.

Luis Carlos Rincón La Rotta M.D.

*Cirujano Pediatra. Coordinador Programa de Cirugía Pediátrica Universidad Militar "Nueva Granada"
Jefe Servicio de Cirugía Pediátrica Hospital Militar Central*