

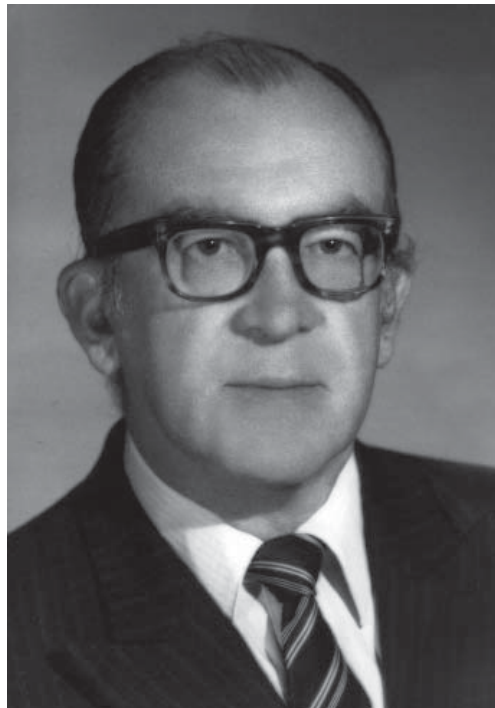
Profile of Dr. Álvaro Caro Mendoza

Álvaro Valencia C, MD¹

¹ Surgeon, Clínica Reina Sofia

.....
Received: 09-02-10
Accepted: 23-02-10

Alvaro Caro Mendoza was born on February 4, 1926 in Bucaramanga. He is the firstborn of a family composed of his father Don Roberto Caro Grau, his mother Doña Alicia Mendoza Hernando Villafrades, and his three younger brothers: Hernando, Roberto and Guillermo. Before he reached his first year of life, Caro Mendoza's family settled in Bogota. However, his childhood was spent between Bogota and Bucaramanga, studying with the misses Esguerras in Bogotá, and in Bucaramanga with the Sarmiento sisters. At the age of 11 he entered San Bartolomé School in Bogotá for his secondary education, from which he graduated in 1942. In 1943 he entered the Faculty of Medicine of the National University of Colombia in Bogota. Upon finishing his studies he did his rotating internship at the Clínica de Palermo and spent a semester studying Pathology with Professor Egon Lichtenberger in San Juan de Dios Hospital. He received his degree Doctor of Medicine and Surgery degree in 1949. His thesis was "Two new techniques for choledochoduodenostomy."



In 1952, Dr. Caro began his General Surgery residency in the service of Professor Anzola Cubides Chief of the Surgical Clinic at San Juan de Dios Hospital. His other teachers were Hernando Anzola Cubides and Juan Di Domenico, his classmate was Rafael De Zubiría. He obtained his specialization in 1955.

His teaching career began in 1956 as instructor of surgery with the National University of Colombia in San Juan de Dios Hospital. He becomes an associate professor in 1957 and then a full professor in 1961.

In 1964, he traveled to Boston to study in the Neck and Vascular Surgery programs at Harvard University. His teachers were Oliver Cope and Robert Linton, respectively. He studied there until 1967 when he returned to become Head of the Department of Surgery at San Juan de Dios Hospital. Later he returned to the United States to learn about the studies of Professor Lucius Hill in anti-reflux surgery.

His research on esophageal surgery, including Heller's operation for Achalasia, the Hill-Larrain's operation for reflux and Orringer's Transhiatal esophagectomy for cancer, is well recognized. His distinguished work on pancreatic surgery, specifically his text *Pancreatic Surgery* and research on cystic tumors are equally well known.

Throughout his career he has been linked to various scientific societies. He is a member of the Colombian Association of Surgery which honored him in 2001 with the Masters of Colombian Surgery speech on the theme "Gastroesophageal reflux yesterday, today and tomorrow". He is also a member of the Colombian Association of Gastroenterology, of which he was President from 1971 to 1972 and which honored him in 2009 for his life devoted to teaching. In addition he is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

He was chief of Surgery Department at Samaritan Hospital between 1982 and 1986. He retired from practice in 2001. Now he is ending his academic work after being Rector of the Sanitas University Foundation from 2004 to 2009.

Those of us who were privileged to be students of Dr. Caro received great deal from him: his immense generosity, his teaching, and his admirable intellectual skill. More than that, we all had the opportunity to enjoy his eternally youthful and unmatched jovial personality.

Thank you very much, Dr. Caro.