

Homage Jaime Campos Garrido

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Madame President, Members of the Board, Colleagues:

Thank you very much for this opportunity. Thank you for letting me say these brief words evoking my colleague and friend Jaime Campos Garrido.

The first thing I want to say is that I was probably not a very important person in his life but he was very important in mine, and from this point of view, possibly selfish, I want to say what I am about to say. This is not, of course, a biographical profile of Jaime Campos since that would not be for me to do, but rather brief account of what I lived by his side.

Born in Popayán “in an illustrious family” as Efraím Otero would say at his burial, he became a doctor at the Universidad Nacional, his always beloved university. He was formed as an Intern and later as a Medical Gastroenterologist in France, where he was more French than the Frenchmen. Then he returned to his Alma Mater where he developed a fruitful career as an academic and a researcher, enriching and refreshing Colombian gastroenterology with new endoscopic techniques through the bile duct, although he never left clinical gastroenterology aside. His contribution to digestive endoscopy in the handling of bile ducts are self-evident: they circulate in national and international magazines, his various publications with the group from the Universidad Nacional in Nutrition, his decade-long interest in the area of ethics and bio-ethics, his management as dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the Universidad Nacional and the implementation of Telemedicine as a technological element to ensure state-of-the art knowledge in medicine for underprivileged people.

He always held to a moderate left-wing stand, believing, without too many hopes of success, in every campaign of that social sector without being a radical. He was always talking about the possibility of finding many different ideologies in society. He was a typical French socialist.

After his return to Colombia, he assumed the role of promoting dozens of Colombian doctors who, with his recommendation, managed to be accepted at French hospitals to perform digestive gastroenterology or endoscopy. His continuous efforts, not always recognized by those of us he recommended, clearly demonstrate one of his characteristics: generosity in friendship without asking for anything in return. Instead he allowed those colleagues to develop their professional lives autonomously.

He was not just an endoscopist, he was an excellent medical doctor with a genuine socialist perspective about his professional activity and about what he thought Colombian Medicine should be.

Always the dilettante, often a dissenter, frequently perceived as unsettling at academic and professional discussions, but always in solidarity with his colleagues.

I met him for the first time in 1981, when he reluctantly accepted becoming a part time professor at the Faculty of Medicine at Universidad Javeriana in the Gastroenterology service that I directed. I remember his first patient review and the bewilderment of the residents in Internal Medicine when he asked them: "What is the medical history of this patient's nutrition? What does he eat? How much does he earn?" That social outlook, essential in our profession, was not false posturing, it was his permanent discourse. Our responsibility is to the ill, to the science and art of medicine, and through medicine, to society. Inside each one of us is the dissent necessary for patients to always receive the best. This clamor must be universal to avoid the manipulation that places the patient as a shield before our personal interests. Our demands are fair and our exercise is non-negotiable. This clamor will only be legitimate if we act appropriately toward the patient, committed at all levels, and, in this manner, reclaim for ourselves and for those who will come after us, the dignity of our mission.

A couple of months later he came to work with a red rose to celebrate the victory of the French left wing with Mitterrand on top. His socialism was genuine. By the end of that year he showed me a paper napkin, which I still keep with me, a note by professor Claude Ligoury where he pointed out that I would be accepted in his service to perform endoscopy without any further formal procedures. He took me to the dean and managed to have the university place me on a research grant. Later, he went with me to the French Embassy where he managed to have them grant me a generous visa.

After my return to Colombia, we started our lengthy task at the Asociación Colombiana de Medicina Interna (Colombian Association of Internal Medicine), at the Acta Médica Colombiana magazine and in the editions of the Texto de Medicina Interna, always working side by side. He was General Secretary and I was Assistant Secretary of the World Congress of Internal Medicine.

There were many nights of unpaid work, rewarded only by the printing of texts or the publishing of each issue of the magazine, back then under the direction of Fernand Chalem.

I had the privilege to become Executive Secretary of the ACMI when he was president and to pass on the post of President of the ACG, managing to be excused from the board meetings so that he could stamp his own character without my sometimes uncomfortable presence as the ex-president. Nevertheless, he often had to call me later to put me in charge of different endeavors which I performed outside of the spotlight.

On the two occasions where I was given the task of organizing Colombian Congresses of Internal Medicine, he was

always ready to help me by suggesting names, networking and hosting, and he was always generous with his help.

Some years later, the wheel of life brought us together as relatives by marriage when my son married one of Jaime's relatives, closing up the circle. When I learned that he was sick I took it as yet another act of his intellectual coherence. What else could it have been if not his bile duct!

Dear colleagues: The world needs more people like Jaime Campos Garrido. Let us remember his critical and committed outlook toward those with fewer privileges and make it our own. Allow me to quote a few fragments taken from his writings that are in full force for us both as doctors and specialists.

"In today's commercial framework, doctors experience a great deal of difficulties in their daily practice of applying their medical judgment in a way that appropriately incorporates modern science and technology since it is often complicated - sometimes due to a lack of updating and sometimes due to simply to a poor understanding of human nature. Moreover, doctors have to face an endless number of diagnostic and therapeutic options. These decisions usually have a pragmatic outcome and often a dangerous one. If we add to this the existence of procedures that favor an individual, institutional or advertising status, which sometimes do not offer the patient any real benefit, the image of the doctor will continue to deteriorate inexorably in the eyes of the community."

Or, as he further stated,

"This profitability turns welfare into a product and the medical exercise becomes unfavorable due to the distortion of doctor-patient relationships since the liberty which should exist when a patient chooses his doctor and institution disappears. Absolute values such as existence, dignity and health itself become market products."

Let us make the words of José Félix Patiño our own. Here is his description from the Academia Colombiana de Medicina magazine:

"A Tribute to Jaime Campos Garrido, 65. Jaime is one of the most brilliant professionals who ever graduated from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. He then specialized in gastroenterology in Paris. He had a deep sense of social responsibility and an outstanding academic vocation. He was a real pioneer. I clearly remember, decades ago now, his important role in the beginnings of digestive endoscopy and endosco-

pic intervention through the bile duct in Colombia. It was he, Jaime Campos, who was able to extract an impacted calculus from the ampulla of Vater; I know it because he performed this on one of my patients at the Hospital de la Samaritana who had been moved to the Clinica Marly.”

I believe the best homage that we could pay to his memory is to appropriate his ideas, to live medicine and our spe-

cialty with that clear social vision that defined him. I cannot say that cliché phrase “Rest in Peace” because he did not believe in that. So, I say simply, “we’ll meet again.”

Jaime Alvarado Bestene

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