



RAÚL A. BORRACCI, MD (1958-2021)

A unique surgeon

There is no doubt that Raúl was a unique surgeon. Born in the city of Buenos Aires and raised in the neighborhood of Palermo, he felt so in tune with the city that it was almost impossible for him to leave. He did not travel physically, but most of his papers did actually travel across the world. Proud of his Italian citizenship, he studied the language of Dante Alighieri. But this was not enough for him, and he studied German in the Goethe Institute.

If we look at his career, we will find a number of characteristics that are not easy to find in our profession. He liked numbers and studied Math before starting Medicine. This was the basis of his teaching adventure at Universidad Austral where he held the Chair of Statistics becoming one of the university most distinguished professor until he died. His early departure and obsession for perfection stopped him from writing a treaty on this specialty. However, his colleagues will probably publish it posthumously though.

He was a distinguished student of Medicine and he graduated cum laude. He started practicing General Surgery at Hospital Español, and he eventually joined the Hospital de Clínicas where he completed his residency. The very first day of his residency, he claimed that cardiac surgery was his ultimate goal, and he completed his medical training at the Hermenegilda Pombo de Rodríguez Foundation Cardiology Institute of the National Academy of Medicine.

We enjoyed working together as surgeons for many years. He was always willing to help me whenever I'd need it, and many residents admired him and valued his unconditional support.

Following his thirst for knowledge, he graduated as a System Analyst. This added to his knowledge as a statistician and innate skills for research built the perfect set of skills for him to become the director of the Argentine Journal of Cardiology, and become a significant contributor to the Argentine Journal of Surgery and the Argentine Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery of the Argentine College of Cardiovascular Surgeons.

He used to call the restaurants close to the Medical School and Hospital de Clínicas his true office. As a matter of fact, he was always around writing or editing papers.

There were times that the Italian in him led to bitter confrontations. However, he was always a passionate collaborator with everyone both in the surgical field and in medical research. His position in academic discussions was solid, difficult to refute, and revealed his true personality. He always expressed deep thoughts under a cloak of political correctness.

His main hobby was to read, and his huge library was his pride and joy. His family probably missed his participation in worldly distractions because what he loved the most was to spend hours of his time reading his books.

He spent his spare time studying the art of combining sounds and music, especially European classic composers like Beethoven. Actually, this does not really paint a fair picture because the truth is that whenever he was not at the operating room or writing papers, he could be found listening to music. Holidays were a waste of time according to him and he rather spend his time alone surrounded by the magic of his books.

He transmitted his passion for music to his daughters who learned how to play several instruments as kids. He always said he took great pride in this. His wife Fernanda was his greatest support as she tolerated such a special personality focused in studying all the time.

He had a knack for communication and empathy with the people around him. He could make the most bitter comments to his relatives, but he knew how to make them in such a way that nobody would ever feel offended or hurt.

His personality was completely different from other surgeons I have known, and he became Head of Cardiovascular Surgery of Hospital Alemán after a long and fair public competition.

Over the last few years, he used to brag about the fact that he was immortal. He also said he had become a legend as if he was expecting an early departure. He was wrong about the former because he has gone before his time. However, all those who spent time with him truly believe he was right about the latter.

Miguel Rubio