EDITORIAL

To our mentor and friend, Professor Solé-Balcells

Al maestro y amigo doctor Solé-Balcells

Glossing the career of Dr. Francesc-Xavier Solé-Balcells is not easy, but I will try to do it from the point of view of the quality that he has always shown in any of his contributions in over 60 years of practice of urology.

He started in urology as a resident of Professor Antonio Puigvert in Spain which was very different from Spain now. He quickly became known for his scientific rigor, his clinical and especially surgical commitment; all of this made him gain the respect of the international urological community from a very young age. Between 1970 and 1978 he was the head of the urology department of Valle Hebrón Hospital and between 1978 and 1992 he was the healthcare director and professor at the Puigvert Foundation in Barcelona, forming between the two schools over 100 residents, today being master of masters.

He was the president of the l’Associació Catalana d’Urologia from 1974 to 1978 and the president of the Spanish Association of Urology from 1982 to 1986. In 1989 he was awarded the highest honor of this association, the Francisco Díaz medal, and in 1998 he received the Willy Gregoire Medal of excellence of the European Association of Urology in recognition of his contribution to the development of urology.

Over several decades Dr. Solé-Balcells was a leader in urologic surgery. We can highlight his contributions in retropubic adenomectomy, transperitoneal abdominal nephrectomy, renal transplant, cystoprostatectomies, bladder reconstruction, large lymphadenectomies due to testicular cancer, and his ability to solve the most complex structural abnormalities of the urinary tract, as his numerous awards in urological surgery internationally attest it. It was a great pleasure to see him operate with that hard-to-beat skill: a perfect cadence between speed and economy of movement in the surgical field, what we would call in modern management being very effective and, above all, efficient.

Many urologists have been fortunate to learn beside him and share the operating room, visitor passes and sessions with him. He was a professor of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Catalonia, participating in educational activities of the urological specialty until the last minute of his life.

In recent years, he developed an intense journalistic and humanistic activity of which we can highlight his poetry books and his lectures on topics, which beyond medicine, enabled him to explore the world of culture from multiple aspects.

On countless occasions, we had the privilege of hearing him talk about issues that have little to do with urology, but which let us see to what dimensions our specialty can lead us to throughout life. This is the real dimension of Dr. Solé-Balcells, who left us, after more than half a century of journey through urology … former chief of the urology
department, former president of the AEU, professor, journalist, poet, and always friend with whom I shared a table and tablecloth and multiple tips from father to son.

His patients loved him and admired him for his impeccable manner and human warmth and, above all, for his results. Thanks master, on behalf of all urologists, not only Spanish but also internationally, for giving and bequeathing his professional example, integrity, honesty, generosity, and for making it possible for all to say goodbye, with that lucidity that he kept until the last minute and that we all would want to do it as you did: with your boots on, on April 23, 2014, at age 90 (Fig. 1).

R.I.P. and our deepest condolences to his wife Carmen, his children Xavier and Silvia and family.

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