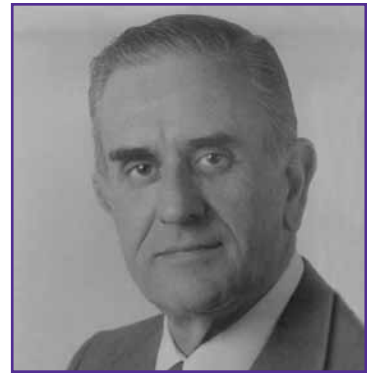


Dr. Franklin Merlo, Master of Argentine Orthopedics and Traumatology



It is with deep regret that I bid farewell to Dr. Franklin Jorge Merlo, former President of the Asociación Argentina de Ortopedia y Traumatología [Argentine Association of Orthopedics and Traumatology]. I confess that, when I learned of his retirement from healthcare activity a few years ago, I felt a strong impact that made me recognize the effect of the passage of time in our lives.

I can say that I had the privilege of having had contact with Franklin Merlo for as long as I can remember, as he was a colleague and friend of my parents. So I was able to meet him outside the professional field, as well as his beloved wife Toti, who passed away many years ago. He supervised me during part of my residency at the Hospital de Clínicas and I participated with him in numerous academic activities. He was a gentleman in his attitude and demeanor. A restless spirit, a great reader of vast culture, with deep knowledge especially of history and art.

He trained as a surgeon at the Hospital de Clínicas and was a disciple of Dr. Atilio Risolía. He became interested in spinal pathology, although he practiced general Orthopedics and Traumatology. He was a founding member and president of the Sociedad Argentina de Patología de la Columna Vertebral [Argentine Society of Spinal Cord Pathology]. He was Head of Service at the Hospital Alemán.

He taught passionately. He supervised the medical records without missing spelling and even style errors. I remember his observations regarding the use of the gerund, among many other things. He took time to sit down with his residents and show us the basic surgical instruments of our specialty and, for example, explain the difference between an osteotome and a chisel, demonstrating clearly how each should be used. He encouraged us to include drawings and diagrams in our operative reports and gave his opinion on them.

He was always linked to editorial activity. He supervised the translation of the monumental work of Campbell, was a great promoter of our Association's Journal, and directed PROATO, the Update Program in Traumatology and Orthopedics.

He was detailed and meticulous as a surgeon, as well as in every moment of his daily life. Many years ago, at the AAOS conference, I presented a poster developed at the Charles Rockwood Service. I was about to present it with Carl Basamania, at that time a Rockwood fellow, when I saw Dr. Merlo coming. I told Basamania that he would surely find a mistake in our poster. When he arrived he greeted us affably and read the work from a distance with great attention. At the end he approached us and, as I feared, he had found a misspelled word in English in a scientific work by Rockwood himself.

This tendency to perfectionism coexisted with a pleasant and cordial character. He deeply loved his wife, his three daughters, and his grandchildren. Among them our beloved Cecilia, a fellow resident who inherited all the human and professional virtues of her father and who unfortunately passed away before him.

The physical departure of Franklin Merlo not only reflects a generational change, but also the end of an era in Argentine medicine that those of us who had the privilege of living it will always yearn for. Upon his passing, the only thing that exceeds my sorrow is my admiration for this great man and professional.

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