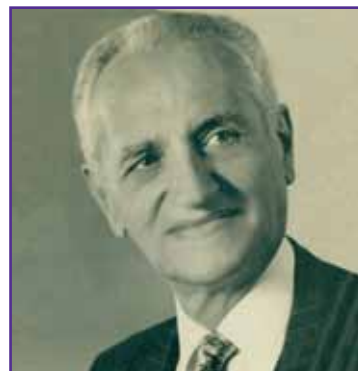


Dr. Carlos Firpo (1930-2024)



His humanity is such that it is only because he was one of my teachers that I feel compelled to write about something so difficult to express in words.

To be precise, I will refer to one of the most beautiful passages in the history of medicine. In his old age, Ambroise Paré responded to the criticism of Gourmelen, the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, who disqualified him for being a barber surgeon rather than a surgeon in long robes: “Dare you teach me surgery... You who have never come out of your study. Surgery is learned by the eye and hand. You, mon petit maître, know nothing else but how to chatter in a chair.”

Carlos Firpo comes to mind, and with him, the memory of his hands working meticulously and methodically in the operating room. He performed his surgical tasks with precision while verbally teaching, generously sharing his knowledge without the slightest hint of selfishness. All of this defines him as a great man.

I also recall his involvement in projects that he conceived and allowed us to share. His calm demeanor, thoughtful speech, and constructive attitude set a course that we would respectfully strive to follow.

Carlos Firpo was born on February 22, 1930. He graduated from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), where he also earned the rank of Associate Professor.

His hospital career included serving as Ward Chief at the Hospital General de Agudos “Carlos G. Durand” and Division Chief at both the Hospital General de Agudos “Dr. Cosme Argerich” and the Hospital Aeronáutico Central. Notably, he was also a Hand Surgery Consultant at the Hospital Nacional de Clínicas de Buenos Aires, where Prof. Dr. José Manuel del Sel was Chief of Service.

His contributions to professional societies are equally distinguished. He served as President of the AAOT (Argentine Association of Orthopedics and Traumatology) and later of the Argentine Congress of the AAOT. In 2001, the AAOT awarded him the title of Master Surgeon.

He held several prestigious positions, including:

President of the South American Society of Hand Surgery, of which he was a founding member.

President of the Argentine Society of Hand and Upper Limb Surgery.

President of the Argentine Shoulder and Elbow Society and the South American Shoulder and Elbow Society, both of which he also helped found.

He was named an Honorary Member of the Argentine Medical Association, the AAOT, and the Argentine Shoulder and Elbow Society.

Dr. Firpo received numerous accolades, including the Dr. Carlos Durand, Dr. Cosme Argerich, and Quinquela

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Martín Prizes. In 2010, he was recognized as an Outstanding Personality by the Legislature of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.

He authored 13 books, including the *Atlas de Técnicas Quirúrgicas en Ortopedia y Traumatología* and, most notably, *Lecciones de Cirugía de la Mano y Miembro Superior*, in which he masterfully described the surgical management of upper limb paralysis and rheumatoid arthritis. He also directed numerous postgraduate courses, both in Argentina and abroad.

This remarkable career and life trajectory could not have been achieved without the unconditional support of his wife, Wanda.

I first met Dr. Carlos Firpo at Hospital Durand during the South American Hand Society Fellowship, where he served as Director. I fondly remember his dedication, his patient teaching, and his ability to inspire those around him to strive for progress and improvement. He had a way of bridging the distance between master and student, and I am honored to have had the privilege of being by his side at some point in my career.

Dr. Oscar Varaona

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