



Dr. Paulo Emilio Archila-Falla
January 6, 1948 - June 30, 2021

The field of Colombian gastroenterology has lost one of its great exponents. Dr. Paulo Emilio Archila's demise occurred on June 30, 2021, after waging a difficult battle against one of the diseases which, ironically, he fought against next to his patients, without ignoring its credible seriousness. It is undoubtedly a regrettable event which grieves not just our country and the scientific societies in which he was very active, but also the "world" of gastroenterology, with which he shared his valuable knowledge irrespective of borders.

Dr. Archila was born in Bogota on January 6, 1948. He graduated from high school from Colegio Andino in 1965 and went to the Universidad Nacional de Colombia School of Medicine, graduating as a Medical Doctor on January 12, 1973, at the age of 25. He subsequently completed his year of rural medical practice in Guamo, Tolima. With his knowledge of German, in October 1974 he was admitted to the University of Göttingen Medical Clinic (Germany) on a gastroenterology and digestive endoscopy scholarship, under Professor Werner Creutzfeldt, from whom he obtained his knowledge of metabolic liver diseases, pancreatic diseases and the pathophysiology of the digestive tract. He returned to Colombia a year later to finish his training in internal medicine and gastroenterology at Hospital San Juan de Dios in Bogotá in October 1978.

His career as a gastroenterologist was brilliant and widely recognized by his colleagues, with whom he shared his professional life. He was elected president of the Asociación Colombiana de Gastroenterología [Colombian Association of Gastroenterology] from 1985 to 1987. He served as editor of the *Revista Colombiana de Gastroenterología* [Colombian Journal of Gastroenterology] from January 1986 to March 1995. He was editor of *Acta Médica Colombiana*, the journal of the Asociación Colombiana de Medicina Interna [Colombian Association of Internal Medicine] from 1999-2009, and one of the general editors of the internal medicine textbook "Aprendizaje basado en problemas" [*Problem-Based Learning*]. He was editor of the first edition of the gastroenterology and hepatology book which was presented to the Academia Nacional de Medicina [National

Academy of Medicine] in July 1996. Several of the capital's renowned institutions helped him develop and increase his endoscopic knowledge and skills, including Hospital de San Juan de Dios, Hospital Santa Clara, Fundación Santa Fé de Bogotá, Clínica Shaio, Hospital Universitario de San Ignacio, Clínica del Country, etc. He was a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology, the American College of Physicians, and the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, and a founding member of the Asociación Médica Latinoamericana [Latin American Medical Association]. His international recognition led him to be named Honorary Member of many gastroenterology societies in other countries: Argentina, Ecuador, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

There are undoubtedly many more professional and academic achievements attained by Dr. Archila throughout his lifetime, of which we, unfortunately, are unaware.

The success of his professional practice lay in always acting according to the real objective of medical practice, which is “the wellbeing of the patient,” and his patients always acknowledged and thanked him for this.

An accomplishment which is by far more important than those mentioned thus far, and with which absolutely all of those who spent time with him agree, was that of becoming an exceptional human being who was able to communicate to all his students, colleagues, friends and family a “**candor**” which is literally defined as “...*the state or quality of being frank, open and sincere*...”. This was his most important accomplishment, something which few others can claim at the end of their days.

His life always included the fervent love of his wife, Cecilia, with whom he formed a beautiful home, the fruit of which were his two daughters, María Virginia and Lina, who, in turn, rewarded him with four lovely grandchildren who arrived with the purpose of increasing his happiness, a purpose which they amply fulfilled.

The memory with which we are all left is that of a face which always wore a smile, a friendly gesture which gave an invitation to converse, share and enjoy. Dr. Archila was a real pleasure seeker. We will never forget his special fondness for music, the accordion and dancing and the good (although they now seem “scarce”) times shared with him and his dear wife.

When he recently suffered the effects of a serious illness, I can attest to the fact that Dr. Archila faced it with courage and optimism, and battled to the utmost, even though, as a physician, he understood his poor prognosis.

Personally, I feel a deep sadness for the loss of this great human being who contributed enormously to the development of gastroenterology in Colombia, and for whom I have great respect.

I once again express my solidarity and esteem to his wife, daughters, grandchildren and other family members.

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