In Memoriam

Julio Hernán García, MD
December 22, 1933–November 8, 1998

With the untimely death of Julio H. García, MD, the neurological and stroke community in the United States and abroad has lost an esteemed colleague and a respected researcher. Julio died on November 8, 1998, as a result of subarachnoid hemorrhage from a ruptured cerebral aneurysm.

Julio H. García was born in Armenia, Colombia, and completed his medical education and initial training in pathology in Bogotá. He then emigrated to the United States at age 26 to further his instruction in pathology, eventually becoming a neuropathologist. His mentor in neuropathology was Stanley M. Aronson, with whom Julio always maintained close ties. His career subsequently took him to the Medical College of Virginia in 1964, the University of Tennessee in 1967, and Baylor College of Medicine in 1970, during which time he was developing a growing interest in the neuropathology of cerebrovascular diseases. In 1971, he became Head of the Division of Neuropathology at the University of Maryland. In this capacity, and over the following 8 years, he produced a number of important publications in the area of the neuropathology of stroke. He became interested in the development of experimental stroke models, always directed by the idea of using these models for the testing of clinically relevant problems. Following a year’s stay in Bonn, Germany, as a recipient of the Alexander von Humboldt Senior US Scientist Award, he continued his studies of human and experimental neuropathology of stroke at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, where he became the Director of the Division of Anatomic Pathology–Neuropathology in 1979. After an 11-year tenure in this position, in 1990 he moved to the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, where he created the Division of Neuropathology. In addition, in 1993 he was appointed Professor of Pathology at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

Throughout his career, Julio excelled as a neuropathologist and as a teacher, and was the recipient of numerous teaching awards, including Teacher of the Year (University of Maryland, 1976), and Best Basic Science Coursemaster (University of Alabama, 1986). His many contributions to the advancement of neurology and neuropathology in Spain were recognized by his election as Honorary Member of the Spanish Neurological Society in 1987. In the United States, he was a member of the American Academy of Neurology, American Neurological Association, American Society for Experimental Pathology, and the Stroke Council of the American Heart Association. At the time of his death he was a member of the editorial boards of Stroke and the Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Diseases, and he had served previously in that capacity in the Journal of Neuropathology and Experimental Neurology. His scientific productivity was remarkable: he was the author of over 150 papers and 85 book chapters and the author or editor of 5 books, including the recently pub-
Julio’s research career was dominated by his interest in addressing problems that originated from a clinically relevant question. He was well versed in the basic neurology of stroke and made a special point of keeping current his knowledge. He often attended clinical rounds in order to learn about yet-unsolved clinical questions, which he could then approach from a pathological point of view in the experimental animal or in his observations of human pathology. In these endeavors he frequently had the collaboration of colleagues from the United States and from abroad, as they sought Julio as a source of training and guidance in the pursuit of their research ideas. In this capacity as mentor and colleague, he was patient, generous, and inspiring, and his intellectual influence has reached far into Europe, Asia, and South America through the training of many colleagues. This resulted in his collaboration with multiple scientists and clinicians and in the design of novel models of experimental stroke, including the transorbital approach to middle cerebral artery occlusion in the monkey, and a model of cerebral infarction in the rat. These allowed him to make unique contributions in the areas of anatomic ultrastructural changes after cerebral infarction, changes at the level of the microcirculation, the effects of reperfusion in the cerebral microvasculature, the role of leukocytes at the vascular endothelial level, and the concept of incomplete cerebral infarction.

On a personal level, Julio was polite and benevolent, and he had the unusual ability of making everybody around him comfortable and, especially, happy. He was always the center of groups that often exploded in laughter as they were amused by his remarkably funny stories and experiences. His wit and ability as a story teller always attracted audiences who knew they were going to have a good time. However, this delightful aspect of his personality went along with a remarkable intellectual depth, which allowed him to excel not only in the field of medicine but also in areas of general culture, literature, and art. He was an avid reader who developed a profound knowledge of the history of the United States, his beloved adopted country, as well as that of Europe. He loved classical music and was able to recognize most pieces after listening to the first few notes.

Above all, Julio was a family man. After he married Irene Murray in the summer of 1966 in Richmond, Virginia, their life together was a story of mutual devotion and strong bonds. They raised two sons, David Allen and Lawrence Thomas, who were inspired by the scholarly interests and wise counsel of their father to pursue careers in medicine and law. The children enjoyed a home environment filled with love, devotion, and respect, and learned to follow their father’s example of intellectual depth, love of knowledge, and honesty. Julio was their role model as a man devoted to his work and, especially, his family. This devotion of Julio’s also involved his extended family, and he was the magnet around which portions of the family in the United States and in Colombia remained united throughout the years.

This tragic loss leaves the neurological stroke community without one of its most outstanding and beloved leaders. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Julio as a friend will miss his wit, warmth, and compassion, and will carry his memory forever in our hearts.

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