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OBITUARY

Luis Munuera Martínez



FIG 1 Prof. Dr. Luis Munuera Martínez.

On January 5th 2011, Prof. Dr. Luis Munuera Martínez died in Madrid. He was Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology and Head of Department of this discipline at Hospital La Paz, retired since 2005 (Fig. 1).

Luis Munuera was born in Madrid in 1935. He was the son of a paediatric orthopaedic surgeon, Luis Munuera Morosoli, and a teacher, Teresa Martínez Perier.

He attended school at the Lycée Français in Madrid, in 1941, where the French syllabus gave him an eminently rational character, which was more formative than informative. It also put him on the path of modern languages and he came to read, speak and write French as a mother tongue, with an advanced knowledge of English.

It was probably the example of his father that led him to choose Medicine as a profession, and he began his studies at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid in 1952, finishing his degree with eleven honorary distinctions.

During his degree, in the summer of 1958, he obtained an Exchange Fellowship at the Allgemeines Krankenhaus Barmbek, which enabled him to come into contact with German Orthopaedics.

After completing his degree, he obtained a scholarship for Universidad Menéndez Pelayo in Santander. He attended a Biology course and began to familiarize himself with the world of basic research. Between 1959 and 1961, he worked as a Resident Physician under Prof. Dr. Vara López.

In 1962 he gained a position as Resident Physician for the Great Hospital of the General State, in the service of Dr. Antonio Hernández Fols.

During his period of residence, he obtained a British Council scholarship in 1963, moving to Oxford with Josep Trueta. There he met leading figures in Orthopaedics such as Sommerville, Scott, Goodfellow and Bullough, who were all working at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre.

In 1964, he rejoined the Great Hospital and began to work as an orthopaedic surgeon at San Rafael Children's Hospital.

In 1969, he obtained a grant from SECOT and moved to the Hospital For Special Surgery in New York, where he was reunited with Peter Bullough, and initiated research which would lead to the production of his doctoral thesis, supervised by Prof. Dr. Vara López. This thesis would be read in 1973.

His career in SECOT began in 1970, where he began as Librarian and held different positions until becoming President in 1990.

In 1973, he obtained the position of Service Head at the "South Residence", initially known by this name and currently as "12 de Octubre" Hospital. In 1979 he was appointed Director of the Centre for Traumatology and Rehabilitation of La Paz Hospital.

In 1980, he gained the position of Attached Head of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology in Badajoz, obtaining a forced discharge due to his public office.

In 1980, he was appointed Assistant Director General for Staff Training and, in 1981, Director General of Health Planning. In 1982, after resigning from his public post, he obtained the position of Department Head at La Paz Hospital, where he remained until his retirement.

He obtained a transfer to the position of Professor at Alcalá de Henares University and, subsequently, in 1986, at Universidad Autónoma in Madrid.

He was a founder and the Spanish representative of the European Federation of Orthopaedics and Traumatology,

member of the University Council, President of the National Commission of this Speciality from 1990 until his death, founder and director of the Biomaterials and Bone Pathophysiology Research Group at La Paz.

The number of doctoral theses he directed, courses, conferences, presentations at Conferences, research projects and publications in various journals, have conformed a hardly achievable curriculum.

As a summary of his professional life, he should be described as a man ahead of his time, emphasizing the following points: knowledge of languages; interest in research from the early years of his career; training in general surgery for two years and specialist training for a further four years; expanding his knowledge abroad; creating teams of collaborators; passion for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching; social commitment in his

experience in public life and excellence in health care. All these details of his biography made this man into a person who will always be remembered by those who were privileged enough to work with him; his professional development should provide guidance and encouragement for the coming generations.

We wish to express to his wife, Amalia, to his children, Curra, Javier and Luis and to his granddaughters Jimena and Carlota, all our sorrow for the loss of someone as exceptional as Luis Munuera.

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