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### Editorial

## The Gold Ombredanne, not merely an award<sup>☆</sup>



## Ombredanne de Oro, más que un premio

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Next June this year, during the XXXII Colombian Congress of Anaesthesiology and Resuscitation to be held in Barranquilla, a new ceremony will take place to present the Award and Order of the Gold Ombredanne to the most outstanding anaesthetist of S.C.A.R.E. This event will be an opportunity to remember the work and extol the significance of the thirteen individuals who, to this date, have received recognition for their contribution to the specialty. People who have paved the way to make of the profession of anaesthesia what it is today in Colombia, and who made contributions to energise and develop the Society and all represents as a scientific and professional organisation working to promote the quality of life of its members.<sup>1,2</sup>

The idea of paying tribute to the life and work of the most outstanding Colombian anaesthetists was first conceived in 1968, during the 14th S.C.A.R.E. Assembly. The aim was to recognise significant academic and professional contributions to the specialty and the Society. Entrusted to the Board of Directors, this idea initially took the form of an "Honourable Mention". Fifteen years later in Medellín, during the 30th S.C.A.R.E. Assembly on June 24, 1983, Jaime Herrera Pontón

(President of S.C.A.R.E. 1975–1977) proposed the revival of the idea of recognising and exalting distinguished anaesthetists with the Order of the "Gold Ombredanne". On that occasion, the Assembly presented the award to Dr. Juan Marín Osorio, considered the father of anaesthesia in Colombia.<sup>1-3</sup>

However, it was only in 1990 that Dr. María Eugenia Gómez, President of the Board of Directors, accepted the idea of making a replica of the inhaler device created in 1908 by Louis Ombredanne, a brilliant surgeon who introduced amazing changes that transformed the safety of paediatric anaesthesia. The replica of the Ombredanne does not weigh the 4 kilograms of the initial device invented by the Parisian surgeon. Instead of metal and rubber, it is made of 18 karat gold. But more than material value, it represents a tribute to excellence, professionalism and prolific academic life of individual that embody the most inspiring devotion and love for the "art of the gods", the profession practiced by great personalities like John Snow, William Morton and so many others who have contributed to the greatness of this magnanimous invention of mankind that brings life to the aphorism of "sometimes curing, often alleviating and always comforting", which comes from the 19th century and

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it is attributed by medicine historians to the French doctors Adolphe Gubler and Claude Bernard.<sup>4</sup>

The Award Ceremony was first instituted in 1987 and the first laureate was **Nacianceno Valencia Jaramillo**, who was voted in accordance with the regulations of S.C.A.R.E., Articles 70-73: "obtaining at least two thirds of the secret votes cast by the delegates with rights to voice and vote". For many, doctor Valencia has been considered the most outstanding man in the history of Colombian and even Latin-American anaesthesia. He was born ahead of his time. After training in North America, although given the opportunity to remain there, he decided to come back to his birthplace in Medellín, driven by the need to put his knowledge at his country's service and to teach and transform anaesthesia into a profession and science.<sup>1-3</sup>

On June 14, 1991, the Colombian Congress of Anaesthesia and Resuscitation that took place in the city of Manizales presented the award to **Dr. Rafael María Sarmiento Montero**. No better choice could have been made and the award was given very rightly to an ethical and innovative professional, a scientific and professional leader of the highest academic qualities and a true role model of a man who devoted his life to anaesthesia and served the society and the specialty unconditionally.<sup>1-3</sup>

In 1995, this distinction was bestowed on doctor **Jorge Osorio Reyes**, a man of the trade and indefatigable fighter who strived to stamp a seal of quality in his work, warmth in the care provided to patients, and fair working conditions for all anaesthetists. The Colombian Journal of Anaesthesia was also one of his wise decisions. Although rebellious and critical, he always worked to ensure that the Society should be there for all.<sup>1-3</sup>

Dr. Arnobio Vanegas, Secretary General of the Society between 1989-1991 and President between 1993-1995, proposed that the Ombredanne Award be given every two years instead of every four as had been the tradition.<sup>1-3</sup> In 1997, the distinction went to doctor **Marceliano Arrázola Merlano**, a son of the Caribbean coast who had settled in Medellín, an academic with a flair for words, demanding and educated. His debates were always inspiring, as they revolved around eloquent, informed and fair discussions both in academic as well as professional settings.<sup>1-3</sup>

Manizales was also the birth place of another great man, a giant who always knew that education was the key to the development of the specialty, and it is to education that he has devoted his entire life as a teacher and academic leader. A rigorous, honest and capable anaesthesiologist and exemplary citizen who has contributed to the development of public health in his region. Amazingly productive, researcher, historian of medicine and indefatigable writer, his name is **Bernardo Ocampo Trujillo**, Ombredanne 1999.<sup>1-3</sup>

Another great son of Caldas, Arnobio Vanegas, trained in Antioquia and developed his career as paediatric anaesthetist in Valle del Cauca. An honourable man, perhaps the most organised of all, worked obsessively in paediatric anaesthesia which he practiced and enriched with his extensive academic production and his creative spirit. He shone in all academic events to which he contributed with his reflections and research. He also lived on in his countless pupils to whom he taught the art of learning by teaching and

doing. He received a well deserved Ombredanne award in 2001.<sup>1-3</sup>

In 2003, the award went to a professor of Cartagena, Bolívar, who trained in Universidad del Valle, dean of the school of medicine of Cartagena, and a relentless advocate of decent working conditions for anaesthetists. All his pupils remember doctor **Sebastián Merlano Mesa** as a man of wisdom, true to his word and tough.

Bogota-born **Julio Enrique Peña Baquero**, an unassuming gentleman like no other, had no rivals when the time came for him to receive the Order of the Gold Ombredanne in 2005. His outstanding professional practice, his long and enduring devotion to the Colombian Journal of Anaesthesia and his obsession for safety in the operating room are the hallmarks of his greatness.<sup>1-3</sup>

In 2007, the award went to a son of Barranquilla, shaped at Universidad Nacional de Colombia, with the academia running in his blood and teacher of competent anaesthetists enlightened by the awareness of the need to honour their specialty. His name, doctor **Fernando Flórez Burgos**. His training in different European countries, and his tenacity and commitment helped him make a mark as a great teacher and academic driver of the specialty. He was not alien to associative activity, and the Order of the Ombredanne pays tribute to his significant action and contribution.

Born in Cúcuta, doctor **Carlos Celis Carrillo** was presented with the Ombredanne award in 2009. It was thanks to him that Congress passed Law 6 of 1991, regulating the practice of anaesthesiology. A trustworthy, hardworking and honest man in politics, an activity usually synonymous with law-bending self interest. He and his wife set the example of social commitment and dedication to serving others.<sup>1-3</sup>

In 2011, the Ombredanne was presented to our pioneer in intravenous anaesthesia, **Alberto Vanegas Saavedra**. A man who has travelled the world, learning and teaching. He trained in the Netherlands, Belgium and France and, upon returning, he generously shared his knowledge with his students. To him we owe the first world intravenous anaesthesia congress held in our country (the IFIVA Congress that met in Cartagena in 2013). His recognition in total intravenous anaesthesia reached the European continent.

In 2013, first woman to receive the award was doctor **Cecilia Correa Ramírez**, master of paediatric anaesthesia and notable for her modesty. A daughter of Caldas, she is caring and devoted to her patients and students. Perhaps unique in the way she can understand pain by just looking at a child's face. Fortunately, she was lost to obstetrics and chose to remain in anaesthesia, a profession to which she has devoted her life with unequalled generosity.<sup>1-3</sup>

Doctor **José León Esmeral**, staunch advocate of decent work for health workers, exemplary anaesthetist and relentless fighter, committed body and soul to the defence of the speciality in different settings, he received the award in 2015 in Barranquilla, a city that welcomed him as a professional. He has always been an optimist and a winner.<sup>1-3</sup>

This is perhaps a unique award in the world in that, being the Ombredanne "device" made of "gold", it symbolises the highest worth and represents anaesthesia as a source of permanent inspiration and safety. As can be seen, this is a representative sample of the values of Colombian

anaesthesiology, wisely picked by the various S.C.A.R.E. assembly members entrusted with the mission of recognizing people who have put patient wellbeing, comprehensive training for the students, and advancement for the profession above any other consideration, and who have set the example through their own personal lives and their professionalism.

It is incumbent on us to imprint in the memory of Colombian anaesthesiology the names of those who took it on themselves to provide future generations with an organized scientific society of the highest academic level, recognized in the realm of national and international anaesthesiology and among other medical specialties.

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The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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