



Dr. Miguel Granja

Farewell to a brilliant professional and excellent friend

One morning just like any other we woke up with the tremendous news that Miguel Granja had passed away during the night (November 1, 2014).

We started calling each other; slightly incredulous and with the illusion that it was a mistake.

Phone calls rained from all close friends who, when learning the sad news, wanted to know if it was true ... because no one could believe it.

It was surprising to us all; not only for the unexpected loss but also for what his absence meant to each of us.

Miguel was always there for everyone, with the right, thoughtful and sensible answer.

Suddenly we realized that he would never again fill that void. And the emptiness was huge.

Some of us commented: but I talked to him yesterday..., we saw a patient together..., he called me to explain something...; all of us felt in that moment the fragility of human life, the importance of each moment shared, the absurdity that someone whom we loved so much could physically disappear from one moment to the next.

But then the moment of calm and reflection arrived; of who really was the one who had left, and we all agreed that the MASTER, the pioneer of pediatric interventional catheterization, the great searcher of answers, the tireless worker who did not take no for an answer, the father of his beloved daughters and grandchildren, the loving husband and companion, the always present friend, had gone.

In each of us there was a different answer; I thought -I have lost a brother in life-, and suddenly remembered -I have had the joy of sharing and living with him the excitement of doing so many things: the first atrial septal defect closure by percutaneous intervention; such a thrill; it was the time when therapeutic intervention was winning the battle, it was the great innovation of that time, unthinkable for all since at that moment we only had the surgical option; or when the first closure of ventricular septal defect was performed in our hospital, in the year 2000; amazing, this was already 14 years ago; and then I thought of

the thousand stories we had shared.

In the evenings we would talk about each patient and discuss as long as necessary until we had a corresponding answer. If someone proposed something new or innovative there we went to learn it; because his curiosity was infinite and so was his "stubbornness"; he would never give up and insisted as much as needed until he succeeded.

Miguel, a native of Mar del Plata, completed his university education in the city of La Plata and joined the Hospital Pedro de Elizalde for his residency in pediatrics. He was initially attracted by intensive care, to which he committed himself for a time in the same hospital.

But with the arrival of Dr. Eduardo Kreutzer (son of the legendary Rudolph Kreutzer, father of Argentine pediatric cardiology), his life took a new course. He decided to dedicate himself to hemodynamics.

He chose to complete his studies at the Hospital Ricardo Gutiérrez where Dr. Gustavo Berri was in charge together with the renowned cardiologist Dr. Rodríguez Coronel, and he remained there for some time, later to take over the hemodynamics service of the Hospital Pedro de Elizalde, a position he held until retirement.

His enthusiasm attracted at first those who like him were beginning to take the initial steps in the specialty: Beatriz Zarlenga, María Marta Binello, María Inés Román, Rubén Cuttica and others as renowned as himself. Then we arrived, César Viegas, Enrique Flores, Enrique Fischman and the author of these lines, Ana de Dios. Year after year countless specialists were formed in this specialty and he was head of hemodynamics not only at the Hospital Elizalde, but also in the various centers he ran.

By then he was already head of hemodynamics of the leading private services in the country: Hospital Italiano, Sanatorio Trinidad Mitre and Palermo, Clínica Bazterrica, Sanatorio Anchorena and others. How did he manage all this? He only knows.

Determined, he worked many hours a day, always ready for each new task; he formed a solid group of

collaborators, disciples and friends, all as prestigious and renowned as himself.

His disciples are spread everywhere in the country and they recognize him as their mentor, teacher and friend: Luis Trentacoste, Jesús Damsky Barbosa, Marcelo Rivarola, Victorio Luccini, Liliana Ferrin, Jorge Gómez, Alberto Quilindro and others. And his daily collaborators, Beatriz Zarlenga, Nilda Batista, Maria Grippo, María Inés Román and Eduardo Kreutzer, his teacher and friend.

Internationally recognised by his peers, he participated in the most prestigious academic areas, and his modesty and righteousness, in addition to his skills on the field, distinguished him. Always in good spirits, a friend of his friends; he always named in his lectures Horacio Faella, his contemporary, who together with Dr. Luis Alday and then with his pupil Alexander Peirone brought the big change and progress of the specialty in Argentina.

However, people are fragile; we come and go about the world according to the designs of some superior being, who decides when and how we depart.

But what matters is what we leave in each of those we knew and with whom we shared our existence.

Miguel left us his *joie de vivre*, his energy to reach the unreachable, his love for the profession, for his

family, for his friends.

And today we are all a part of him and his torch is with us and so will remain as long as we pass it, because each of us is part of the possibility of being and growing granted by this country.

We are neither better nor worse than anyone else; we are beings capable of fighting for what we want and achieving it. Like him, who got the most sincere recognition of his national and international colleagues, who knew how to listen, follow and recreate his friends and colleagues throughout his life, who always looked for the new, the different, the unexpected.

Miguel Granja, our friend, companion and protector, you will be missed and will always be in our memory.

Grief over the loss of the loved one is huge. But I think it is attenuated when we remember the moments shared.

Miguel will always live in our memories and his spirit will kindle the light within each of us with his desire to be and accomplish, and will be the engine driving us forward to find every day a new reason to grow. He will be with us forever.

Ana María de Dios^{MTSAC}

Tribute to Miguel Granja

Miguel Granja should be considered one of the pioneers of Pediatric Interventional Cardiology, both in our country as in Latin America. Since his medical beginnings he understands the future importance of Hemodynamics in Pediatric Cardiology. He starts practicing the specialty with Dr. Alberto Rodríguez Coronel, Head of the Hemodynamics Section at the Hospital de Niños Ricardo Gutiérrez. Upon the appointment in 1974 of Dr. Eduardo Kreutzer as Chief of Cardiology at "Hospital Pedro Elizalde", they establish a personal relationship that would lead them to long years of fruitful achievements: Advanced University Course in Pediatric Cardiology and creation of the Hemodynamics Section, where Miguel Granja was the first Head of the Service.

In 1976, the arrival of a hemodynamics team at Hospital Elizalde would have a dramatic impact in the development of Miguel Granja's work, achieving between 400 and 500 catheterizations per year. Later he would enter as pediatric hemodynamist in Clínica Bazterrica. Both in public and private activity he was ahead of his time in our setting, being one of the precursors of interventional procedures in children. He was the main protagonist of the first percutaneous valvuloplasty, balloon angioplasty for coarctation of the aorta and pulmonary branches, and endovascular occlusion of congenital malformations (ductus arterio-

sus, and atrial and ventricular septal defect).

With the integration of the Cardiology, Surgery and Hemodynamics services of the Hospital de Niños, Gutiérrez and Elizalde in 1988, an Operational Unit that will be the fundamental basis of the Specialist in Pediatric Cardiology Career is developed. There, Miguel Granja displays his great capacity, both in clinical work and medical education. With great ability in the understanding of congenital heart disease and exquisite handling of the catheterization technique, he has been teacher to a significant number of colleagues. His intellectual strength and enormous disposition to daily work turned him into an indispensable pillar of education, which he combined with a gentle and caring nature that also extended to the patient's family.

He was an active participant of medical societies and generator of multiple scientific papers. He was currently working on the increased use of percutaneous prosthetic valve replacement in pulmonary position, the development of hybrid practices and the proposal to establish centers for adults with congenital heart disease.

Ultimately, Dr. Miguel Granja was a unique and irreplaceable figure. An initiator of Pediatric Interventional Cardiology, but above all possible reference a great Master for those who had the privilege of being part of his brilliant career.

Eduardo Kreutzer^{MTSAC} and Luis Trentacoste