



Tribute to Dr. Jaime Villalba Caloca. At one year after his departure

Homenaje al Dr. Jaime Villalba Caloca. A un año de su partida

José Luis Sandoval-Gutiérrez*

*Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Respiratorias Ismael Cosío Villegas, Mexico City, Mexico.

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Whoever doesn't know Molecular Biology, is doomed
Dr. Jaime Villalba Caloca
Thoracic Surgeon. Doctor in Science

Dr. Jaime Villalba Caloca passed away on November 18, 2020 in the middle of the respiratory pandemic, a week later a tribute to this great master of Pneumology and Thoracic Surgery in the country was held at the Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Respiratorias Ismael Cosío Villegas, I was invited by the General Direction to participate in this event, where I expressed the following speech:

The present year 2020 will be remembered in our Institute as that of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and in which Dr. Jaime Villalba Caloca departed.

I arrived as a resident of Pneumology to our Institute at the beginning of this century, in the General Direction was the Doctor, who also assumed the position of Titular Professor of the course; he was in the final stretch of his administrative responsibility.

When by chance we met, we received his greeting and courtesy, always direct and frontal; he enjoyed the respect, affection and admiration of the vast majority of health personnel, regardless of hierarchy.

He was a pioneer in thoracic surgery and lung transplantation in Latin America; in the last third of his life he had a particular interest in research, achieving a PhD from the Instituto Politécnico Nacional,

in addition to his incorporation to the National System of Researchers.

My relationship with him became closer the day he invited me to give a talk at the Hospital Bioethics Committee that he chaired, I spoke on a sensitive subject from the thanatological point of view as euthanasia, then I joined the committee and for 10 years we had a regular monthly session, and when the extraordinary one was needed we formed a Cineclub with themes of Medical Ethics, we gave conferences on this subject in several places of the Institute, I always had their sympathy in spite of the fact that sometimes there were subjects that forced us to discuss our personal points of view, in the end concord and respect prevailed. He reached what is called the old age and always maintained an enviable vitality.

He had a superior affection for our Institute, which is difficult for us to instill nowadays, but it's very necessary that it be so.

We were companions in the struggle when the vagaries of fate forced us to do so.

Every end of the year he organized a breakfast with our dear Lulu, his faithful squire, he was always cheerful, I think we were an extension of his family, which we proudly accepted.

It was interesting to hear his anecdotes; he had an incomparable sense of humor, combined with seriousness.

It's difficult to say goodbye to a teacher, friend and companion, despite having several decades of age difference with the Doctor, it was very pleasant to talk with him.

I remember when he supported me in paying a well-deserved tribute to Dr. Ismael Cosío Villegas, founder of our Institute, in a general session, the way he talked about his experiences with the Master made it a memorable conference, at the end his humility was reflected when he approached me and asked me, "did I do well?"

We were able to achieve one of his dreams, to publish the book of Institutional Bioethics, to which he had dedicated many years of work, but the publishers did not comply with the agreement, in an agile way and with the support of the industry we fulfilled that desire, having it currently in paper version and in electronic form for free distribution since a year before his death.

When life forces us to answer "how would I like to grow old?", the quick answer would undoubtedly be "like Dr. Villalba"; the other question would be "will I have the temper, character and disposition of the Master?", I hope that time will clarify the answer.

The memory of Dr. Villalba Caloca will not be extinguished, tributes like this one and those to come will keep the flame of this great man and his light will show us the way in times of darkness.

We must remember that he arrived at our Hospital when there was another pandemic: tuberculosis. The so-called «white plague» seemed to be an incurable disease, but with work, dedication and service, even risking their lives, they were able to face it and come out ahead.

This example should be and is the current guide, we will do what is necessary and if the situation demands it, more than what is necessary.

Forever Dr. Jaime Villalba Caloca!

Forever INER!

Thank you very much.

Speech read on November 25, 2020 at the general session of the Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Respiratorias Ismael Cosío Villegas in honor of Dr. Jaime Villalba Caloca.

Correspondence:

José Luis Sandoval-Gutiérrez, MD

Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Respiratorias Ismael Cosío Villegas, Mexico City, Mexico.

E-mail: sandovalgutierrez@gmail.com



Dr. Jaime Villalba Caloca
<https://www.medicographic.com/pdfs/neumo/nt-2017/nt172i.pdf>