

## THE ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED PUERTO RICO LECTURESHIP FUND

### Presentation of the Second Annual Distinguished Puerto Rican Lectureship

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A very close relationship has always existed between the Medical Schools of The University of Maryland and the University of Puerto Rico. It has covered almost this entire century. The whole thing started with Don Rafael Janer y Soler, a prominent educator who came from a family of educators. In the year 1899, he went to Baltimore to set up a preparatory Boarding School and in the year 1901 this boarding school was finally established in Mc Collough Street. Those who are familiar with Baltimore know that Mc Collough Street is within walking distance of the University of Maryland grounds. So it could be anticipated that the majority of those students finally were going to enroll in the different schools of the University of Maryland, like the Dental School, Law, Pharmacy, but more so in the School of Medicine. This relationship became closer when Felipe Janer, the brother of Don Rafael, Vice-President of the recently instituted University of Puerto Rico, made arrangements with Maryland authorities whereby every year two seats were reserved in the Medical School for two Puerto Rican students who were recommended by a commission named for that purpose. This commission hand-picked two students from the School of Science, and later, from the Pre-Medical School of the University of Puerto Rico. So it is not surprising to see that no medical school in the United States has graduated more Puerto Rican physicians than the School of Medicine of the University of Maryland. As a matter of fact, over 160 of them. When these Puerto Rican physicians returned to Puerto Rico they became pioneers, not only in the field of medicine and surgery, but leaders in their communities as legislators, mayors of towns, Secretaries of Health, politicians, historians, directors of hospitals, whatever. A list of Maryland graduates who were Presidents of the Puerto Rico Medical Association is shown in Fig. 1. Most of you will recognize the names. It was said at one time, that to qualify for the presidency of the Medical Association you had to be a Maryland graduate. It is true that these individuals contributed enormously to Puerto Rico, but none of more importance than the contribution

#### PRESIDENTS OF THE PUERTO RICO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION UNIV. OF MARYLAND GRADUATES

Year		
1919	Jorge del Toro	'06
1932	Rafael Bernabe	'13
1934	Pablo Morales Otero	'19
1941	Oscar Costa Mandry	'21
1957	Guillermo Picó	'40
1958	Luis R. Guzmán López	'40
1961	Enrique Pérez Santiago	'43M
1962	José M. Torres Gómez	'43M
1963	José Licha	'41
1968	José Álvarez de Choudens	'44

**Figure 1.** Maryland University School of Medicine graduates who were Presidents of the Puerto Rico Medical Association.

they made towards the creation and development of this Medical School, your Medical School, the first medical school established in Puerto Rico, the Medical School of the University of Puerto Rico. Figure 2 shows the faculty of the School of Medicine in the year 1954, the year that the school graduated its first class, and very easily you



**Figure 2.** Faculty of the University of Puerto Rico Medical School in 1954.

could recognize more than 20 Maryland graduates who already formed part of that faculty. At one point this school faculty had forty seven appointees who were graduates of the University of Maryland.

I am going to say a few words of three or four of those Maryland alumni who contributed so much to the Medical School of the University of Puerto Rico. Forgive me if I do not mention many more that should be mentioned, but we do not have enough time. I will start with **Dr. Luis Guzmán López** of the class of 1940, at the left in the photo shown in Fig. 3.



**Figure 3.** Photo taken in 1957 during the consultation of Pablo Casal's case. From left to right: Dr. Luis R. Guzmán López '40, Dr. Ramón M. Suárez, Dr. Paul D. White, Dr. José Passalacqua and Dr. Guillermo Picó '40

Luis Guzmán was the first to organize and teach a course in neuroanatomy, the first to organize and teach a course in neuropathology, the first to organize and later chair a Section of Neurology, and also was the first to organize and later chair a Section of Neurosurgery; a tremendous contribution for one man.

On the extreme right of the same photo is **Dr. Guillermo Picó** who is with us today. Dr. Guillermo Picó, also of the class of 1940, organized and became Chairman for many years of the Department of Ophthalmology. Among the many things that he accomplished, he developed a basic course in ophthalmology that has been attended by close to five hundred physicians, not only from Puerto Rico but from abroad. It gave an international name and flavor to our Medical School. For all his work, the University of Puerto Rico bestowed upon him the title of Professor Emeritus.

We also have the architect of the Department of Surgery, **Dr. Frank Raffucci '43** D right in the middle of picture taken in 1970. (Fig. 4). He is surrounded by practically all the residents who were the product of his accredited residency in surgery. He was presented at that time, which was about a year or so before his untimely death, a silver



**Figure 4.** Dr. Frank Raffucci, in center, with his former Residents.

plater upon which were inscribed the names of all his residents. Doctor Raffucci performed quite a number of surgical Puerto Rican firsts. The laboratory of experimental surgery which is located in the main building of the Medical School carries his name. Also from the class of 1943, is **Dr. Enrique Pérez Santiago '43 M**, President of the Puerto Rico Medical Association in 1961. Through him, the medical school received its first artificial kidney. Not only that, he also became the organizer and Chairman of the Section of Hematology. Years later, he became Dean of the Medical School.

Let's say just a word about **Dr. José Picó of the class 1933**, Guillermo's brother. He was responsible for the organization of the Section of ENT. (1st. Chairmain)

**Dr. Juan Roselló**, a graduate of the year 1938, the father of our governor, was responsible for the creation of the Section of Psychiatry and for the first accredited residency training program in psychiatry.

I'll mention just one more name because we cannot leave his name out. I consider him to have been the soul of this Medical School and I am referring to **Dr. Mario Rubén García-Palmieri '51.** He held the position of the Chief of the Department of Medicine for thirty years, perhaps more, and he also is responsible for the creation and its direction, of the accredited residency in Internal Medicine. At the present, he is the Chairman of the Section of Cardiology. For this and many other achievements, the University of Maryland granted Dr. García-Palmieri the title of Distinguished Alumnus.

Well, with all this work being done by all these graduates, it is not surprising to find out that in April 1976 the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico passed a resolution recognizing the contribution of the University of Maryland through its graduates, and expressing their gratitude and their appreciation for the contribution of this University which has resulted in so

many benefits for the Puerto Rican people. At this time other Schools of Medicine began to appear in the Puerto Rican scene, so that, the arrangement that Don Felipe Janer had with the University of Maryland, no longer being necessary, was discontinued. Moreover the Puerto Rican students need not apply to schools in the United States, the University of Maryland included, because there are enough medical schools in Puerto Rico, perhaps more than enough, to which the students could apply.

We, of the alumni, began to see the writing on the wall: a probable break in the traditional relationship that had existed between Maryland and Puerto Rico. Here is a sample: this picture (Fig. 5) was taken in the year 1957 when **Dr. Edward Uhlenhuth**, the very notorious



**Figure 5.** Dr. Edward Uhlenhuth and University of Maryland graduates during his visit to Puerto Rico in 1957.

professor of Anatomy of the School of Maryland, was invited to come to Puerto Rico to spend a week with us. It was taken at a dinner that was held in his honor and he is surrounded by all Maryland graduates whom he had taught Anatomy. The one sitting next to him, **Dr. Víctor Montilla '30**, was the first Puerto Rican who was taught Anatomy by Dr. Uhlenhuth at Maryland. Dr. Uhlenhuth lectured to our first year medical students on (what else?) the Endopelvic Fascia.

Well, in order to try to assure continuation of the relationship that had existed, we devised a plan. This plan

was presented to Dr. John Dennis, who was then Dean of the Medical School of the University of Maryland, during one of his visits to Puerto Rico around 1986 (Fig. 6). We



**Figure 6.** Dr. John Dennis, Dean of the Maryland University School of Medicine and Puerto Rican University of Maryland graduates. This day in 1986. The Puerto Rico Lectureship Fund was established.

presented the plan to him and he approved it. The plan's name was The Puerto Rico Lectureship Fund. This fund was created with personal contributions from the Puerto Rican Maryland medical alumni and the monies it generated were to cover the expenses of the program which consisted in an interchange of visiting professors between both Institutions once a year, on alternate years, for the years to come. This program was started last year by Dr. García-Palmieri who went to Baltimore and delivered his lecture there. This year is Maryland's turn, and that's the reason why we have the luck and the pleasure to have Dr. Donald Wilson, Dean of the Medical School of the University of Maryland, with us today. He will deliver the Second Annual Distinguished Puerto Rican Lectureship.