



Professor Oscar Contreras Ortiz (1935–2017): remembering one of urogynecology's true visionaries

G. Willy Davila¹  · Harold Drutz² · Harry Vervest³

Received: 7 October 2018 / Accepted: 15 October 2018 / Published online: 3 November 2018
© The International Urogynecological Association 2018

Our dear friend Oscar Contreras Ortiz passed away 18 October 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He is survived by his wife, Claudia R. Alvarez, and his son, Gonzalo Contreras.

One of urogynecology's most influential thought leaders for decades and a founding member of the International Urogynecological Association (IUGA), Oscar was a key visionary behind the formation of the new OBGYN subspecialty of urologic gynecology, which would eventually become urogynecology.

Oscar was born on 16 December 1935. The son of one of Argentina's most prominent OBGYNs—gynecologist to Buenos Aires' most famous women, Oscar reported—he was destined to follow in his father's footsteps. He graduated from the University of Buenos Aires Faculty of Medicine in 1960, completing his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the university's Hospital Jose de San Martin. He remained in academic medicine at the University of Buenos Aires Hospital de Clinicas as director of the OBGYN department and subsequently Chairman of Gynecology (1997–2001) (Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4).

His interest in urogynecology started early in his career, greatly expanding during a clinical rotation at Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, MI, USA, with Dr. C. Paul Hodgkinson, whom Oscar considered one of his main mentors. He also visited centers in Scandinavia to increase his exposure to this new field of medicine and meet other leaders in the field. He developed an interest in pelvic neurophysiology and established a highly active laboratory at the Hospital de Clinicas, where numerous clinical fellows were trained. He was a prolific academician, publishing 144 papers in

Argentinian journals and 93 in international journals. He authored many book chapters, and his contributions were recognized by countless awards around the world. Recognition by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) as an Honorary Fellow in 2001 was one of his proudest achievements.

His contributions to women's health are vast, including having trained dozens of OBGYN residents and many domestic and international clinical fellows at the Hospital de Clinicas. Many of his former students are now the leading gynecologists in Argentina, Latin America, and Europe. He was one of the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO's) main proponents of the formation of the Urogynecology Working Group, which recently became a formal standing committee. Along with many others achievements, he championed the importance of pelvic floor



Fig. 1 Oscar Contreras Ortiz in a recent photo

✉ G. Willy Davila
GWilly.Davila@holy-cross.com

¹ Holy Cross Medical Center, Fort Lauderdale, FL, USA

² Baycrest Hospital, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

³ Benschop, The Netherlands

Fig. 2 Oscar Contreras Ortiz hosting two young urogynecologists at his office at Hospital de Clinicas in Buenos Aires



problems in women. The working group published a number of recommendations, including simplification of the prolapse quantification examination. As the world's population of women age, many can certainly be thankful for all of

Oscar's contributions, one of which is IUGA's development and growth. He served as chair of multiple committees and task forces, culminating in his being IUGA's president from 1996 to 1998. He hosted three IUGA Annual Meetings in

Fig. 3 Oscar Contreras Ortiz, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Honorary Fellow, a source of great pride for Oscar



Fig. 4 A unique gathering of International Urogynecology Association (IUGA) Past Presidents (and our current president), with Oscar Contreras Ortiz at the far left



Buenos Aires (1998 and 2003) and Iguazu Falls on the border between Argentina and Brazil (1988). Along with Don Ostergard, he founded the *International Urogynecology Journal* (IUJ), which became urogynecology's premiere international publication. The first edition was published in Buenos Aires, and Oscar and Gonzalo hand-carried copies of the issue to IUGA's annual meeting in Riva del Garda, northern Italy, in 1989. In 2000, IUGA had the opportunity to purchase the IUJ. As a young association, IUGA's financial reserves were insufficient to cover the assessed cost of the journal. Oscar donated his portion of the journal's ownership to IUGA, making the purchase possible. This act of generosity had profound implications on IUGA's future and truly set the cornerstone for IUGA to grow to its current state as the major international contributor to urogynecologic knowledge. Oscar's name is rightfully recognized at the top of the journal's editor page.

Oscar formed and ran the ACOG District Office and Education Center in Buenos Aires where he led efforts to improve postgraduate OBGYN education in Argentina by standardizing and enhancing residency training requirements, and raised the academic presence of Argentinian contributions to women's health literature.

At a personal level, Oscar will always be remembered as a regular participant at international educational activities with seemingly boundless energy and an always-present warm smile. Anyone who visited him in Buenos Aires received the warmest of welcomes and hospitality, which included exposing them Argentina's sights, sounds, and tastes. Long lunches (frequently leading to delayed afternoon activities), late *parrilla* dinners, and colorful Tango shows were routine. He was an avid golfer and a long-term member of Buenos Aires' prestigious Jockey Club.

Many young urogynecologists may not have known who Oscar Contreras was or appreciated his tremendous contributions to our field. However, it is very important for all urogynecologists to recognize his enormous contributions to IUGA and women's health.

Oscar was a dear friend and mentor to many of us, and we will miss him dearly.

A true giant has left us.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflicts of interest None.