



## Ricardo Baroudi: an icon of plastic surgery and a dear friend

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Received: 15 June 2018 / Accepted: 20 June 2018 / Published online: 7 July 2018  
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Sir,

Ricardo Baroudi was born in 1932 in São Paulo. He was the fourth son of a Lebanese couple. His father is from Tripoli in north Lebanon and his mother was originally from Beirut. All through his life, he was very proud of his origins. His marriage with Bea, the great love of his life, in 1975, brought him two children: Marcus Ricardo, a lawyer, and Liza Beatriz, a fashion stylist. He was later gifted with four grand children. He would always express his family pride, especially during Christmas by sending out postcards with family pictures to close friends.

Ricardo graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of São Paulo. His post-graduate training was in the Clinic Hospital of São Paulo University. Six years later, he moved to Campinas with his partner Dr. Edwald Merlin Keppke. Both were pioneers in the specialty in this city which in 1961 had only 230,000 inhabitants. For the first fifteen years of his professional activities, Dr. Baroudi was involved in both academic and private practice in esthetic and reconstructive surgery. Later on, he concentrated on esthetic surgery until he retired after 52 years of practice.

From 1969 to 1973, he developed the Plastic Surgery Department of the Medical School of Campinas University, São Paulo State, where he became Chief. During this active period, he combined scientific activities and his private clinic work with the administration of national and international Plastic Surgery societies. He was General Secretary and then twice President of the Brazilian Society of Plastic Surgery; President of the 12th Brazilian Society of Plastic Surgery Congress in conjunction with the 9th Congress of the Latin American Society of Plastic Surgery in São Paulo (1972); President of the 12th International Congress of IPRAS

(International Confederation for Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery) in Rio de Janeiro, 1997; President of ISAPS (1995–1997), and he presided over the 14th ISAPS Congress in São Paulo in 1997.

Author of more than 130 publications in national and international books and journals, Dr. Baroudi edited a book on Body Contouring Surgery in 1993. In the first 64 international ISAPS post-graduate teaching courses, he participated in 43. He has served as Editor-in-Chief of the Brazilian Journal of Plastic Surgery since 1996 and the newsletter of IPRAS since 2013. Founder and President of APSLD since 2010, he was its Honorary President.

I came to know Ricardo Baroudi 25 years ago while attending in London a conference entitled “Aesthetic Surgery of the 90’s: An Update” on May 11–13, 1993. It was the first conference I attended outside Lebanon since I have returned home from Canada and the USA and 3 years after the war has ended in Lebanon. Not knowing many colleagues then, I was sitting alone in the back of the conference hall. A man came and sat next to me then looked at me and said in a funny Arabic accent “*enta Lebanani?*” (are you Lebanese?); I looked at him surprised then he added “*ana Ricardo Baroudi*” (I am Ricardo Baroudi). After a short conversation, I naively asked him if he would come to Lebanon despite the still unstable situation in case we organize a conference in Beirut. He replied in an eloquent attitude “invite me and you shall see”.

Three years later, I invited him to the Third Pan Arab Congress of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and Burns in Beirut. He immediately accepted the invitation without hesitation. On the planned day of his arrival to Beirut, I went myself to the airport to meet him. Those days, the new Beirut airport had not been built yet, and due to security reasons, all people going to the airport to meet someone were held outside in the sun behind an iron fence far away from the shabby old airport building. Ricardo’s plane landed, and I waited for him to exit the building. I waited a long time in vain without any possibility to ask if he was indeed on the plane; then suddenly, I noted in the far a tall man in blue jeans and a cowboy hat; the man took off his hat and started waving it at me; it was Ricardo. He came rushing towards me all

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**Fig. 1** Ricardo Baroudi at the First World Congress of Plastic Surgeons of Lebanese Descent, Beirut, Lebanon, October 14–17, 2010. (from left) Georges Ghanimé, Ricardo Baroudi, Sami Saad, and Bishara Atiyeh



smiling. Apparently Ricardo came to Beirut without an entry visa required at that time; he was stopped at the airport security desk and was going to be turned away. After some argument, tapping on his chest over his heart, he told the security officer in his funny Arabic accent “*ana Lebni*” (I am Lebanese). Laughing, the security officer unexpectedly let him pass through. This is the real Ricardo Baroudi, spontaneous, innocent, and warm hearted. He came to our hearts in Lebanon without an entry visa; he definitely did not need one.

During that meeting in Beirut, Ricardo entertained the idea of organizing a Lebanese Brazilian Plastic Surgery meeting. Three years later and after numerous communications between him and myself, the 1st Lebanese Brazilian Meeting was held in Beirut on August 26–29, 1999. More than a high standard scientific event, this meeting was a return to the source of many of our Brazilian colleagues and their families. It was immediately evident then that other similar meetings should follow. Unfortunately due to the political and security climate in Lebanon, it was not until 2006 that a second event could be planned. It was supposed to be held in September that year. Preparations were well underway when none expectantly a major military offensive was launched in July against Lebanon lasting 34 days. Naturally, that meeting had to be canceled.

It was not until 2010 that a scientific conference could be organized again in Beirut. Discussing the issue with Ricardo, we have decided to extend the invitation to participate to all Plastic Surgeons of Lebanese Descent. The Association of Plastic Surgeons of Lebanese Descent was born. The First World Congress of Plastic Surgeons of Lebanese Descent took place in Beirut on October 14–17, 2010. It was an enormous success. Jose Luis Haddad Tame from Mexico visiting Lebanon for the first time after being forcefully pushed by

Ricardo to participate in the congress did not hesitate a bit in inviting us to organize the second congress 2 years later in Cancun on October 10–13, 2012. The 3rd congress was again in Beirut on October 23–26, 2014, and the 4th was organized on April 20–23, 2017, in São Paulo. The 5th Congress is being planned in Beirut again in September 2019, and the 6th in Washington DC in 2021.

The Association of Plastic Surgeons of Lebanese Descent—APSLD has now matured into a solid organization with members spread across the vast Lebanese diaspora bound by sincere friendship and deep emotions. This achievement definitely could not have been possible without the inspiration and enthusiastic input of Ricardo Baroudi. With his loss, we have lost a pioneer and innovator in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, a great teacher, and a unique human being. However, his spirit will never be lost and will remain the prime driving force behind the Association of Plastic Surgeons of Lebanese Descent (Fig 1).

## Compliance with ethical standards

**Funding** None

**Conflict of interest** Bishara S. Atiyeh declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Ethical approval** Not applicable

**Informed consent** Not applicable

**EBM** Not applicable