

## Dr. Juan Roca Llop

Dr. Juan Roca Llop passed away in Barcelona on September 23, 2003, at the age of 78 years.

As a pediatrician (University of Barcelona, 1959) Juan soon became fascinated by patients with congenital heart malformations, and this led him to train as a cardiologist at the University of Barcelona School of Cardiology, from which he graduated in 1964. In 1966 he founded, at the Pediatric Hospital of the Vall d'Hebron University Hospital system (then known as the Ciudad Sanitaria Francisco Franco), that was to become the first pediatric cardiology unit in Catalonia. Throughout his life and even well into his later years, he was known for the energy he unstintingly devoted to hard work, and above all for his enthusiasm for learning. To those of us who were lucky enough to have worked at his side, his enthusiasm was captivating and often associated with ingenuous and novel perceptions. He trusted everything and everybody, in his urge to draw from each object and each person anything of potential value they might hold for day-to-day learning.

Although he was eminently a clinician, he was always open to technical innovation and progress. His mode of working led him to fight for what he believed to be necessary. Thus it was that he soon equipped his

unit with a good hemodynamics and heart surgery service. His manner prevented him from perceiving the grayer aspects of life, and this earned him some let-downs and disappointments—which nonetheless never managed to change him. Throughout his career he instigated and pushed for therapeutic advances in a specialty that was originally almost only diagnostic.

He always welcomed with open arms whomsoever came to work with him. He never concealed anything from his coworkers or from other groups who were also involved in pioneering work in Spain. It was thanks to this attitude that we were able to take part in an enriching exchange of knowledge and friendship which led to excellent relations among those of us who shared his enthusiasm for our common goals.

For those of us who worked in the cardiology of congenital heart defects, Dr. Juan Roca Llop was a role model. It is only fitting that those who continue to build on what we learned from him pay tribute to our teacher and friend. May he rest in peace.

Jaume Casaldàliga, Josep M. Girona,  
and Carmen Sánchez

Hospital Materno-Infantil Vall d'Hebron,  
Barcelona, Spain.