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IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Ángel Óscar Ulloa Gregori (F.A.C.S.), 1919–2015. In memoriam

Doctor of Medicine and certified by the American College of Surgeons, Ángel Oscar Ulloa Gregori was born on September 10, 1919 in "El Oro" Mineral, in the State of Mexico. At 96 years of age, and with 62 years in the Autonomous University of Nuevo León passing on his knowledge, we say goodbye to him here, in his own home, on November 2, 2015.

Dr. Ulloa Gregori studied his professional career in the City of Monterrey, Nuevo León, obtaining his titles of Physician, Surgeon and Midwife in 1945, at the School of Medicine of the University of Nuevo León (Fig. 1).

His postgraduate studies in General Surgery were undertaken in Chicago, Illinois, from 1945 to 1949, and continued at John Sealy Hospital, University of Texas at Galveston, Texas, USA, where he held a Research Fellow position at the Laboratory of Tissue Culture from 1949 to 1950, to move on, from 1950 to 1953, to a Residence in Plastic Surgery. He obtained his Certificate of Residency in Maxillofacial Plastic Surgery (Fig. 2), and took the Examination for the Certification of Plastic Surgery (American Board of Plastic Surgery), and was affiliated with the American College of Surgeons.

In 1953 he returned to Mexico and settled in the City of Monterrey as the first specialist with formal training abroad in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. Since his return at that date, he began his work at the "Dr. José E. González" University Hospital, where he developed the Plastic, Reconstructive and Maxillofacial Surgery Service, from which he received the appointment of Head of the Department on January 1, 1954.

From 1953 to 1959, Dr. Ulloa established, in the form of a Tutelary Course, the first program for Plastic Surgery Residency in Mexico. The first doctors trained were Drs. Alfredo Cavazos Garza and Felipe Canales Zuazua. Subsequently, in 1965, he restarted the residency program in Plastic Surgery at the "Dr. José E. González" University Hospital, which continues to date.

From 1953 to 1999, 58 resident doctors, myself included, had the opportunity to be trained by Dr. Ulloa Gregori. Many of our colleagues in Plastic Surgery who graduated from the Reconstructive Plastic Surgery Course of the "Dr. José E. González" University Hospital now occupy or have held prominent positions in the hospitals of various states of the Mexican Republic. Some of them have formed Plastic Surgery Services of their own, or have collaborated closely in their development.

From the beginning to the end of his activities at the University Hospital, Dr. Ulloa developed a file of patients through drawings that showed the pathology in question and its appropriate surgical correction, and took notes on each patient during their daily consultation in numbered notebooks.

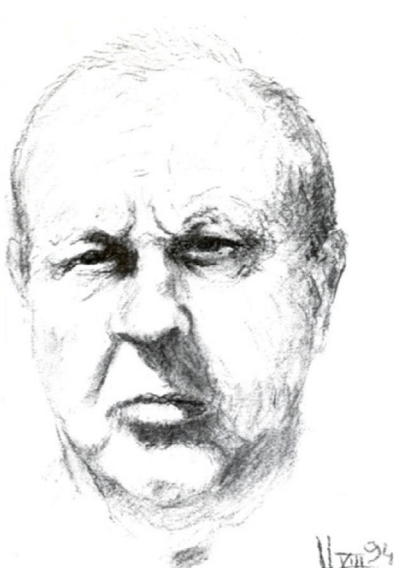
Parallel to his development as a professor, he participated in many research projects, courses and presentations both inside and outside the University, individually and in support of his fellow professors and residents. His creativity is reflected in a number of drawings, where we can also see his sense of humor, his dedication in planning the operations to be performed, his knowledge of human sensitivity and his inventiveness in the development of instruments.

The memory of his creativity is kept by, among other things, the symbol he created and carved himself, to identify Reconstructive Plastic Surgery: The hands, which based on the knowledge obtained from books, reach the battered object to be reconstructed and heal wounds (Fig. 3).

Tireless in his studies, he was one of the first within the School of Medicine to present a thesis with the option to obtain a Doctorate, on November 24, 1988, with one of his original ideas on nasal reconstruction with a nasal SMAS flap, a work which was published in the Journal of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.



1945. Photo from the special library, UANL Library.



1994. Self-portrait and signature.



Social event, circa 2006

Figure 1 Dr. Ulloa Gregori, at the end of his career as Physician, Surgeon and Midwife. On the right, a self-portrait, 1994.

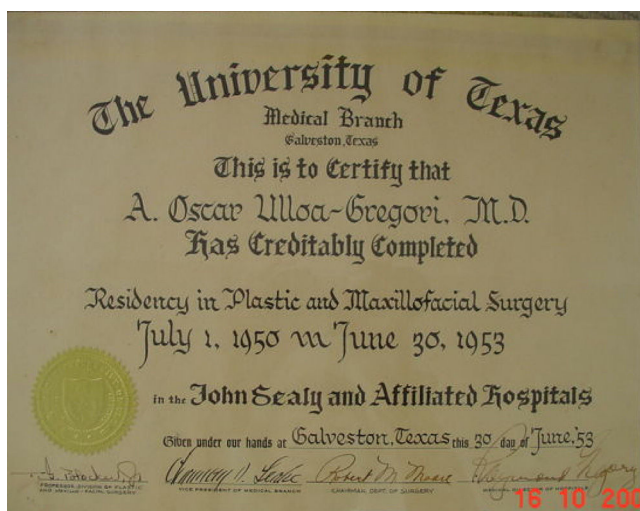


Figure 2 Certificate of Residence. Title granted by the University of Texas, accrediting the residency in Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery, for A. Óscar Ulloa-Gregori, M.D., June 1953.

A good part of the material on display in the Historical Hall of the School of Medicine, which has been named after him since 2002, arose from his fondness for collecting ancient instruments and books. These instruments and books, now on display, once decorated his office.

Upon retiring from his activities in 1997, after 44 years of work, he received the distinction of being appointed Professor Emeritus of the University. He received many other distinctions and recognitions, from the Mexican Association of Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery, from the Mexican Association of Burns, and from the Autonomous University of Nuevo León.



Figure 3 Emblem of the Service of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery of the University Hospital "Dr. J. E. González" from the original, carved from wood for the Dr. Med. Ángel Óscar Ulloa Gregori.

Dr. Ulloa ceased to accompany us at the age of 96, with 62 years spent at the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon passing on his teachings.

From Dr. Ulloa I received, without any misogynistic limitations, his support for the female gender. He said that we

had a special sensitivity and finesse for surgery. I was the first woman admitted to the residency, but certainly not the only one, since in the following years the number grew to four over the course of twenty years.

And in the sessions of 'instrumentopoyesis', as he called this activity, we had to know what we were talking about, and what instrument we wanted to build, because there was everything, for everyone. And each one was building his instrument according to his ingenuity and the needs he had captured. The workshop was a relatively small space, towards the back garden of his house, so full of equipment for cutting, polishing, filing, measuring, welding, etc. In one session, for example, Dr. Héctor Raúl Zapata Ibarra, a resident at the time, invented a retractor with an aspirator for breast augmentation surgery in the form of a corkscrew, which facilitated the entrance of the prosthesis when operating from the inside the suction.

With this teacher, everything was open-door. We were welcome in all areas of his work and his creativity. And the office – a spacious office and healing room, was elegant, full

of books, art objects and paintings. And of course, we could take as a 'loan' any book from that magnificent library, we just had to leave right there, in the place where we took it, a large card, or a sheet, in which we recorded the name of the book we took, the date, our name and signature.

There are certainly many other areas of Dr. Ulloa Gregori's personality that would be difficult to describe properly in a small space like this; these words are only meant to be a brief semblance of a character that undoubtedly influenced the lives of many people in terms of teaching, training, care, and research.

The best feeling is to give, without expecting something in return ... as he used to live.

M.C. Montemayor-Jáuregui
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