To me, he was a major support by accepting the Presidency of the French Society of Angiology. He was always willing to share his extra medical skills to make accessible epidemiology statistics, which are not easy to understand for a field physician.

He has held congressional presidencies in France and around the world, in particular in French-speaking countries. He knew how to quickly get used to the customs of a country.

He was known around the world and, somehow, made France famous as well.

Politics had no secret for him. He was fully attached to his city of Dijon. I always wondered how he had time to do it all, being always available for his friends multiple requests.

It would be -almost- outrageous not to talk about his oenological culture. Those who had shared his table will remember the treasures hidden in his cellar… That would pale the greatest wine waiters!

We’ll miss you François-André!

For all these shared moments, rest in peace. You’ll remain an example for all those who didn’t want to settle for an “hidebound” vision of medicine.

Best luck to Yann, his faithful companion, and to the CEN team of Dijon.

Dr Michèle Cazaubon

References


Reminiscence of my mentor, Prof. Leonel Villavicencio

BB Lee

1 Professor of Surgery and Director, Center for the Lymphedema and Vascular Malformations, George Washington University, Washington DC, USA. Adjunct Professor of Surgery, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, MD, USA. Visiting Professor of Surgery, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, USA. Emeritus Professor of Surgery, Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA.

My mentor, Prof. Leonel Villavicencio was born and raised in Mexico City, Mexico but he established himself as a career vascular surgeon here in the U.S. and rather well known as a world authority in the venous-lymphatic disease based on Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), Bethesda, Md since early ’80 era.
Indeed, Leonel started to collect his invaluable pearls through such extensive studies he has done at many world leading institutes here in the U.S. during his Cardiovascular Surgery fellowships at University of Illinois under legendary Geza De Takats, and then Peter Bent Brigham Hospital of Harvard Medical School under Richard Warren and finally at Children’s Hospital Medical Center under Robert Gross before he went back to Mexico to pay back what he owed to his native country.

But luckily for me, Prof. Villavicencio just moved out from Mexico City to have settled in town at Bethesda/USUHS right on time when I really need his helps. Indeed, when I encountered such crisis with vascular malformation in early ’80 for the first time in my career, soon after I founded peripheral vascular surgery division together with transplant surgery at Georgetown University here in Washington DC, Leonel from Bethesda reached out to rescue me giving such critical helps no one was able to do then.

Indeed, no one among my senior vascular surgeons throughout the country knew how to help me to cope with this odd vascular problem, then known as angiodysplasia before we named them as (congenital) vascular malformation. But Leonel did to me! Since then, he remained the beacon to guide me safely through for over three decades until he peacefully passed away last January.

Leonel, ever proud Peter Bent Brigham–trained cardiovascular surgeon, dedicated his entire career to venous as well as lymphatic surgery; he was the one who always reminded me not to forget that we need more inputs/studies, if not same amount at least, to venous and also lymphatic disease as to arterial disease. He was the one who taught me how to do the lymphatic reconstruction/anastomosis under the microscopy first, often comparing the lymphedema as a poor cousin of Cinderella.

Further, when I decided to go back to Seoul in 1994 temporarily to organize Hopkin’s style surgery program for SamSung Medical Center/SungKyunKwan Univ during my double tenure at the Hopkins, Leonel volunteered to negotiate with SamSung group in behalf of me to provide me sufficient funds to carry on 5 vascular specialty clinics including the vascular malformation clinic and also lymphedema clinic, and remained as a staunch supporter on the programs together with John Bergan and Mel Williams till I get back home to the U.S., 2004.

Lastly, Leonel persuaded me to organize one last mission based on the controversial issues we couldn’t handle successfully through the years while we were organizing 7 consecutive consensuses as well as two handbooks for the vascular malformation and lymphedema. Indeed, when we began to organize the consensus on venous malformation, along with primary lymphedema/lymphatic malformation, commissioned by the IUP in 2007, we were quite surprised and embarrassed to find out there were many issues mired in controversy, with no clear answers to be incorporated into the consensus.

We initially took them lightly, and unintentionally neglected them, until we encountered more hotly debated issues through a subsequently organized consensus for AV malformation that was commissioned by the IUA. I reluctantly took Leonel’s repeated advices to start addressing these issues by collecting and saving them for future review.

Through subsequent updates on these consensuses for venous malformation and lymphatic malformation/primary lymphedema, as well as new additional consensuses for vascular anomaly and chronic lymphedema that we organized for the IUA and IUP, we recognized the serious nature of these controversial ideas for the first time. They were the ‘tip of the iceberg’, which we could not simply ignore as Leonel warned to us!
Leonel gave such decisive help through his perspective in sorting out these many contentious topics. We discussed them through numerous communications while organizing the consensuses, and they became a turning point for us to tackle this ever-challenging task with determination. And we finally launched “Advances and Controversies in Contemporary Management: VASCULAR MALFORMATIONS” with Peter Gloviczki & Francine Blei -see the cited TOC1- last Fall.

Sadly, Leonel couldn’t fulfill his last commitment to write the Foreword although his closest friend and colleague, Hugo Partsch of Austria, kindly stepped in to write it in behalf of Leonel. But, Leonel remained in my heart as my mentor FOREVER. Without Leonel’s constant encouragement, I would have remained a career transplant surgeon without ever having ventured out into the ever-challenging but fertile world of vascular malformation.

BB Lee
A proud pupil of Leonel Villavicencio

References