

OBITUARY

Luis María Baliña, M.D., Ph.D.
1925–1997



Luis M. Baliña was born within a leprosy atmosphere. His father was also an eminent dermatologist with an interest in the disease. In fact, both father and son attended the International Leprosy Con-

gress in Cairo in 1938.

Dr. Baliña studied medicine at Buenos Aires University, graduating with honors in 1949. He did his doctoral thesis on "*El Sistema Reticulohistocitario en la Lepra.*"

His devotion to teaching was intense and profitable. He was the co-author of the books *Leprosy Manual* and *Leprosy at the End of the 20th Century*, published in 1963 and 1996, respectively. He also authored three books on other dermatological diseases. He was a Professor of Dermatology at both Buenos Aires University and Salvador University. Plenty of disciples received from Dr. Baliña the example of humanitarian behavior that always emerged from him naturally. He was the author of more than 200 scientific and investigational works, published both in Argentina and in a number of international journals. He was the founder of the Experimental Leprosy Group at Salvador University and the armadillo laboratory at the Muñiz Hospital. He succeeded in reproducing leprosy in the *Dasypus hybridus* and in developing a reproduction system of these animals in captivity.

Three times he received the prize from the National Academy of Medicine from Buenos Aires. The Argentine Society of Dermatology appointed him Master of Argentine Leprosy and the International Leprosy Association appointed him vice-president for South America. He was also founder and president of the Argentine Leprosy Society, and president of the Argentine Dermatology Association.

Social diseases also took an important place in Dr. Baliña's professional life. He was the author of the leprosy law in Argentina; which resulted in giving compulsory and free treatment and, at the time, put an end to obligatory confinement and prejudice.

He always worked in a disinterested and steady way in the institutions where he worked or that he presided. His constant presence in every ILA Congress since 1938 made many of his colleagues know him well and appreciate and value him for his kindness and education; the same kindness that he offered to his patients. Dr. Baliña was a man of firm civic and religious convictions. He recently celebrated his 47th wedding anniversary, a marriage from which he had eight children and thirty grandchildren.

I am proud to say that it was an honor and a privilege for me to learn and work by his side. Apart from being my teacher in medicine and in life, it was my privilege to be his son-in-law. Everyone who knew him will treasure their memories of a great physician and an outstanding man.

—Raúl P. Valdez, M.D.