

In Memoriam for Dr David V Feliciano, MD, FACS, MAMSE

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Panamerican Journal of Trauma, Critical Care & Emergency Surgery (2024): 10.5005/jp-journals-10030-1440

On 4th January 2024, Dr David Feliciano died. On that day, the world of trauma lost a giant, and the Panamerican Trauma Society (PTS) lost a great friend. He was formally trained in general surgery, vascular surgery, and trauma and had great expertise in endocrine surgery, likely due to his residency training at the Mayo Clinic. He considered himself a true general surgeon who had a particular interest and expertise in the care of trauma patients. Dr Feliciano worked in some of the busiest trauma centers in the United States, such as Ben Taub Grady Memorial, and he finished his career at the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore.

Dr Feliciano's knowledge of surgical history, the literature, and technical surgery was expansive. He was a master surgeon who was equally comfortable operating in every region of the body. He never stopped being a student. When he joined the faculty in Baltimore, he spent time in Sharon Henry's service, which deals with serious soft tissue infections. A patient needed a hip articulation, which was one of the few operations that David had never done. He was actually a little nervous, but he exhaustively reviewed the literature, including the technique. He did the case with Dr Henry, and afterward, he was so pleased that he had learned something new. The patient did very well.

David joined the PTS relatively early in society's existence. He became a fixture at the meetings, rarely missing one. He quickly became friends with many Latin surgeons and visited Columbia many times, often spending several weeks helping to care for patients, operating, and exchanging ideas with the surgeons in Cali and elsewhere. He had an unwavering dedication to supporting Latin American surgeons. He fervently encouraged his Latin colleagues to document their clinical experience, recognizing their exceptional care and technical prowess. He was particularly impressed with those surgeons who were able to achieve great results in environments that did not have all the bells and whistles available in some American centers.

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How to cite this article: Ferrada P, Scalea T. In Memoriam for Dr David V Feliciano, MD, FACS, MAMSE. *Pan J Trauma Crit Care Emerg Surg* 2024;13(1):1-1.

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None

Dr Feliciano served on the PTS board, and in 1996, he served as the PTS President, something he truly cherished. As he aged, he traveled a little bit less, but he always made the PTS meeting a real priority.

Dr Feliciano believed that investing in the future was highly important, and he gravitated toward residents and students. His commitment to fostering equity and diversity in academic surgery was evident in both his words and actions, which were felt worldwide and by all levels of physicians and surgeons. He was a mentor, a friend, and a compassionate advocate for the advancement of trauma care in Latin America. We will all miss him, and the PTS meeting will not be quite the same without him at the microphone. Dr Feliciano's legacy, however, lives on in the hearts and minds of those who inspired him in the Latin American surgical community. We are forever indebted to his vision, guidance, and enduring friendship. He will continue to teach and inspire us, and by doing so, he will live forever.

Thomas Scalea, MD, and Paula Ferrada, MD.