

## Dr. Rafael Ramírez Weiser (1925-2013) and pathology in Puerto Rico

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Dr. Rafael Ramírez Weiser has been one of those prominent Puerto Rican physicians who has contributed greatly to improving the quality of health services in Puerto Rico. With a solid medical and pathology training, he managed to realize his dream of establishing together with outstanding team of professionals an institution that offers high quality services to different Hospital institutions on our island for the benefit of our patients.

Rafael Ramírez Weiser was born in Arecibo in 1925. His mother was American-Irish and his father, native of Puerto Rico. This one had worked with Don Antonio Lucchetti in the important works for generate electricity in Puerto Rico when the Fluvial Sources Authority.



### His Studies and Specialization in Pathology

He continued his Pre-Medical studies at the Polytechnic Institute of San Germán and then went to study Medicine in Philadelphia at Temple University.

After graduating as a doctor of Medicine he returned to the island to do his internship at the Presbyterian Hospital, which at that time was affiliated with the School of Tropical Medicine. There he had opportunity to meet Dr. Enrique Koppish, our eminent pathologist of international renown. During World War II he served in the United States Army in Hospital Rodriguez at Fort Brooke, which worked where Ballajá is today, in Old San Juan.

He then he decided to return to Philadelphia, to the University from Temple, where he continued his studies in Pathology. For 3 years under the tutelage of the most distinguished pathologists of that time. He approved all examinations and Pathology boards and then in 1955 he returned to Puerto Rico.

### Back in Puerto Rico

Here he was appointed Chief of Pathology at the Hospital de District of Bayamón, which was "the jewel in the crown" of our District hospitals. Subsequently, he already In 1958, he was appointed Professor of Pathology of our School of Medicine. In 1960, he moved in with the transfer of the Bayamón District Hospital to what was the Ruiz Soler Hospital when the University District Hospital in Río Piedras, where the Puerto Rico Medical Center would be created. There he was appointed Head of the Clinical Laboratories and he was one of our teachers until 1975, when he retired.

### Laboratory Development

Then she began to realize the dream of his life: the creation of a Department of Pathology and Cytology at the Hospital del Maestro, which today day bears the name "Rafael Ramírez Weiser Surgical Pathology and Cytology Laboratory". Dr. Ramírez later began with the expansion of its laboratory to Ryder hospitals and then Domínguez, from Humacao. In 1965 he expanded the laboratory to Hospital San Francisco in Río Piedras and then also to the Font Martelo in Humacao, in 1984.

In 1989 he founded together, with Dr. Guillermo Villarmarzo, the "Hato Rey Pathology Laboratories", expanding also to Ashford hospitals in Santurce and HIMA in Caguas. In the latter he was created the Laboratory of Immunology and Special Studies. The services have been extended to Hospital Oriente,

HIMA San Pablo in Humacao, to the HIMA San Pablo in Cupey, to Hospital San Francisco, to Professional Hospital and the Metropolitan Hospital Dr. Susoni. These services are interconnected with a network of modern and efficient computing.

### Valuing a Great Professional Team

Dr. Rafael Ramírez Weiser and Dr. Guillermo Villarmarzo recruited a young faculty with various subspecialties in pathology, among which include Dr. Roberto Betances and Dr. Luis Lozada in general pathology, Dr. Kathia Rosado in liver and gastrointestinal pathology, Dr. Juan Pérez Berenguer in neuropathology, Dr. Mariclara Torrellas in cytopathology, Dr. Dana Delgado in hematology, Dr. Luis Ferrer in immunopathology, Dr. Aylvys Pérez in dermatopathology, Dr. Miosotis García, Dr. Vicmari Arce, Dr. Jorge Billoch and Dr. Guillen Sang. This group of doctors has, in turn, a qualified team of technologists. Dr. Ramírez also recruited a efficient staff in administration, including the Mrs. Wally Rossy at the Teacher Hospital. The reports of pathological samples are usually deliver on time to any hospital in the network and in the new central office located now on the street Domenech in Hato Rey.

### Scientific Literature and Research

Dr. Ramírez had a library of medicine and pathology of the first order that he used to consult in difficult cases that were sent to him for his specialized evaluation and opinion.

In addition, he conducted research studies in strokes and changes in endometrium with the use of oral contraceptives. She was author of chapter in Protozoal pathology book and Helminthic Diseases edited by another illustrious Puerto Rican pathologist, Dr. Raúl Marcial Rojas, and published by William and Wilkins in 1971.

For nearly 40 years, together with Dr. Víctor Marcial, radiation oncologist and Dr. Rafael Rizek, hematologist-oncologist, held weekly the Board of Tumors from the Hospital del Maestro. In addition, he came regularly and periodically to all hospitals in the laboratory network to ensure that everything it will go well and also to answer questions. The Dr. Ramírez Weiser received several awards for his professional work.

With Mildred, his beloved wife of 66 years, he formed

a large family, with six children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The Dr. Rafael Ramírez Weiser passed away at the age of 88, in December 2013.

In times like today, when we have to face great challenges in Puerto Rico, we must remember, keep in mind, and emulate the vision and tenacity of this great Puerto Rican doctor who He never allowed himself to be defeated in order to leave a legacy of advanced to the medicine and health of our people.



Participating in a medical conference in 2010.