

Dr José E Medina

José E Medina, DDS, former dean of the University of Florida (UF) College of Dentistry and one of the Founding Fathers of the Academy of Operative Dentistry, died on July 19, 2007, at the age of 81.

Medina was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, in 1926 and entered undergraduate studies at Johns Hopkins University in 1942 as a gifted 16-year-old. He was accepted by the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery at the University of Maryland in 1944 at the age of 18 and graduated cum laude in 1948. He joined the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery faculty after graduation, eventually attaining the position of assistant dean and professor of operative dentistry before leaving to join the faculty at the University of Florida College of Dentistry in 1967 as associate dean and professor of clinical dentistry.

During his tenure at the UF College of Dentistry, Dr Medina served as dean from 1969 to 1974 and supervised the development of an innovative, self-paced dental curriculum, while spearheading faculty recruitment initiatives. Under his watch, the college's first class of dental students was admitted in 1972 and, in the summer of 1974, three members of that charter class were the first students in state history to deliver dental care to Florida residents. He also helped to shape the character of the Health Science Center campus. Dr Medina was appointed director of health center space planning and utilization in 1974 and was promoted to UF assistant vice president for facilities planning and operations in 1976, a position he held for 10 years. Medina was instrumental in guiding facilities planning and implementation during the expansion of the Health Science Center campus, encompassing construction of the Dental Sciences Building, the Communicore Building and facilities to house the College of Veterinary Medicine. He retired from the university in 2000 as a professor of operative dentistry.

José Medina's teaching career spanned more than 50 years; he was a mentor to students, practitioners and dental educators worldwide. He had the choice to pursue private practice, but knew that he could best serve



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1926-2007

the advancement of dentistry through his teaching. He devoted all his energy to furthering the profession he loved by inspiring students and colleagues to always strive for excellence. As Dr Craig Bridgeman noted in his eulogy at Dr Medina's memorial service, "José taught that continuous learning is not just a pleasure, but a professional obligation. While our best intentions are often altered by factors beyond our control, excellence lies not in our best intentions, but rather in the skill, compassion and concern that underlie and influence our actions relative to our fellow human beings. While we will never achieve perfection, striving for continual self-improvement eventually leads to a level of excellence that makes it easy to sleep at night. This was the quintessential José."

Everyone who served with him or who was taught by him has recognized his fervor for perfection and brilliance in performance and kindness by example each and every day. His mentoring activities in dental study clubs are legendary; he often traveled across the country, at his own expense, to quietly teach, kindly critique and plant the seeds of quality health care. It is worthy to note that, at their 45th anniversary celebration, the Hollenback Operative Dentistry Seminar changed its name to the Hollenback-Medina Operative Dentistry Seminar in honor of Dr Medina's years of dedication.

Dr Medina's numerous honors and awards included the Florida Dental Association's Distinguished Service Award, both the George M Hollenback Memorial Award and the Award of Excellence from the Academy of Operative Dentistry, the Distinguished Faculty Award from Florida Blue Key, the UF College of Dentistry's Teacher of the Year Award and Knight Commander, Order of Bernardo O'Higgins, Republic of Chile.

Dr Medina is survived by his wife, Glinda Medina; three children, Lee Medina Lovette and her husband, Jerry; Rick Medina and his wife, Teina Phillips and Ginny Medina Wagner; two stepchildren, Karla Dyer

and her husband, Greg and Aaron Neeper; 10 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren and his brother, Dr Eduardo Medina and his wife, Sylvia. Dr Medina was preceded in death by his first wife, Betty Lee Mansfield Medina, and by his second wife, Patricia Fay Pachler Medina.

Dr José Medina spent his life in service to dentistry and his passing leaves a void not easily filled. His presence will be greatly missed on both a professional and personal level by all who knew and loved him, but his influence will live on in all those he inspired.

Michael A Cochran, Editor

I would like to thank the office of the Dean of the University of Florida College of Dentistry and Drs Craig Bridgeman and William "Rusty" Morris for supplying much of the information contained in this In Memoriam. They are on the long list of individuals who mourn the loss of Dr Medina.

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