

## Javier Maquirriain, M.D



I find it difficult to write an obituary. I have never written one. Still I find it even more difficult when it comes to remembering a friend I was so fond of and looked up to so much. I could characterize Javier with four fairly accurate adjectives—A special, gentlemanly, energetic, wise man. However, since I have been gifted with the tremendous honour to do it, I am going to expand into it, perfectly aware of the fact that no matter how much I write, I will never be able to describe Javier's greatness.

Why was Javier so special? Because he would stand out in whichever scenario—as a human being, as a medical doctor, as a scientist, as a sportsman. He would stand out in whichever endeavor. He played paddle, and he made it to get a world championship; he studied medicine, and he became one of the few who got a doctorate (by means of a thesis on the arthroscopic approach of the Achilles tendon); he specialized in Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, and he was the man who more thoroughly managed Tennis Medicine in Argentina (and I personally believe that he was beyond Tennis). In interpersonal relationships he also was special due to his stainless righteousness, values, consistence and ethics... So much so, that sometimes these virtues were disadvantageous for him.

These features would make a gentleman out of him. From a Grand Slam champion to the most amateur of sportspeople in little towns in the provinces. From a manager at the Tennis Association to a tennis court caretaker; from famous people to the most unknown of all—my brother, a friend of my daughter's, a computer technician at work, a neighbor of mine's acquaintance, and many, many more, were welcome, assisted and treated by Javier with equal professional expertise, scientific rigor and human touch. He unflinchingly would call me to ask about them all, to ask about imaging studies results no matter what socio-economic status or medical insurance.

He was so energetic and proactive that he kept organizing courses, symposiums and grand-rounds that all of us near him would gladly contribute to, and what was curious about it is that he would do it in an unbelievable asymmetric way—he would do the job virtually by himself, and we would all be equally prized. Javier was incredibly generous. Many colleagues, and I myself, would be co-authors in publications he was exclusively in charge of with us contributing just little—or perhaps doing nothing at all—. He published more than 50 scientific articles; he was a CONICET researcher, a Visiting Professor at Yale University (New Haven, US), president of the Society for Tennis Medicine and Science, and

editor of such society's journal. He also was the Asociación Argentina de Tenis's Medical Director, medical doctor at the Davis Cup for a long time, and the CeNARD's Chief of the Orthopedics Department. As if he had been plenty of time, he also wrote three volumes in a series—*Medicina Deportiva Aplicada al Tenis*, a scientific legacy of enormous value for those devoted to the subject.

Wisdom was prevailing in his life. He was wise in Medicine, he was wise in Life. He performed acts and made decisions with moderation and rationality. He would hardly look angry, what does not mean he would not show annoyance when somebody happened not to agree with him; however, he would do so pretending he was not irritated at all, making “surgical”—quite an irony!—use of diplomacy.

All these virtues he kept until the very end. He would know that his fate was sealed by that damned glioma which represented the only handicap truly difficult (or insurmountable) to overcome in his life. He would not throw the tower, though, but he administered his time, his visits, his family's future with the wisdom and self-possession that characterize a winner, although that was a battle that succeeding in was a utopia. He even presented his third book with his passport signed to Heaven, where he now surely enjoys a privileged site. Here remain all us, who enjoyed his friendship and were witness to his nobility. His wife, Cintia, and his children, Serena, Justo, Victoria, Cruz and Constantina should feel extremely proud of him, a man who was more than a great medical doctor— someone special, gentlemanly, energetic and wise, human features that nowadays rarely do we happen to find around us.

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