During the LIx Congress of the Mexican Society of Urology held in the city of Chihuahua, Chihuahua, Mexico in 2008, several urologists from different countries were made honorary life members of the society in recognition of their careers and their collaboration with our association.

The American Urological Association (AUA) was represented by its acting president, Dr. John M. Barry of Portland, Oregon.

Dr. Paul F. Schellhammer, former AUA president, introduced Dr. Terry D. Allen of Dallas Texas, who delivered the following speech in Spanish, in the name of all the new honorary life members:

“I wish to thank Dr. Chávez for this distinction and for the opportunity to offer a few words of gratitude on behalf of all the foreign doctors honored in like fashion on this occasion.

For many years, urologists from Mexico and the United States have enjoyed a warm and productive relationship, but unfortunately language has been a barrier keeping us from getting to know and appreciate one another as we should.

Many years ago a young academic came to the conclusion that the key to a closer relationship with our friends across the border was to improve our linguistic abilities. I encouraged my Mexican friends to study English and I studied Spanish at night at a local school.
After several years I got to the point where I could give a speech in Spanish and this marked a turning point in my life. At that time there were not many colleagues in the United States who could speak Spanish and I suddenly found myself very much in demand.

Over the next thirty years I received more than forty invitations to visit different Latin American countries and I gave over one hundred lectures in Spanish. Because of my interest in foreign languages, I was named president of international affairs by the AUA. During my time in office, Shlomo Raz created ‘Un Día de Urología en Español’ which takes place the day before the annual AUA meeting and you know how successful it has been every year.

But this relationship has not been one-sided. It has changed the lives of everyone involved. As my teacher Dr. Harry Spence used to say to his students:

You are going to learn more than Urology in this service.

And that was true for the students under his tutelage and it is also true for us in our alliance with Latin American urologists.

In my case, for example, I have spent the night in your houses, eaten at your tables, and shared experiences with your families and friends. I have attended the First Communion of a daughter and the wedding of another daughter and in the company of Mexican friends I have visited a cemetery at night in Oaxaca during the ‘Día de muertos’ celebration. I have broken piñatas on Christmas and I have even caught a ‘Bomba Yucateca’ thrown to our group of American urologists by a folk dancer during their performance at a theater in Guadalajara. I have seen the artwork of Rivera, Siqueiros and Orozco, the history of Mexico through the eyes of Carlos Fuentes, and the humor of Marco A. Almazán. I have delved into Mexican culture and thought and because of these experiences I am not that same man who gave his first presentation in Spanish in Guadalajara 36 years ago.

In the United States we say that “in life we should not forget to stop and smell the roses”. Unfortunately, we only say it. Here in Mexico we have learned to smell the roses.

Once more I wish to thank all the members of the Mexican Society of Urology for having made us honorary life members of this prestigious association and especially for your lasting friendship which has truly enriched our lives.1

For those of you who do not yet know Dr. Paul Schellhammer, he was a premedical student at the University of Notre Dame and went to medical school at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City. He did his urological surgical training at the University of Cleveland Hospital in Ohio and the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, Virginia. His postgraduate training in urological oncology was at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center Hospital in New York. He later became professor-in-charge at the East Virginia School of Medicine and then head of its Department of Urology (1989-2000) as well as director of the Residency Program in Urology (1980-2002).2 Dr. Schellhammer has also served as president of the American Urological Association (AUA).3

As a young man he was in the United States Air Force from 1968-1970. Among the numerous urological associations he belongs to are the AUA, the mid-Atlantic Section of the AUA (ex-president), the American Medical Association, The Virginia Medical Society, the Society of Urologic Oncology, the Association for Academic Surgery and now we can add honorary member of the Mexican Society of Urology.

He is director of the Prostate Center in Virginia and member of a large number of counsels and committees. He was administrator of the American Counsel of Urology and President of the Society of Urologic Oncology (SUO).

He has received the following awards and recognition:

1. Recognition for his contribution to Postgraduate Education of the Medical School of Virginia, 1987.
2. Mims Oschner Award.
Lack of long-term usefulness of antibiotic-impregnated catheters, long-term antimicrobial therapy and other unproven methods for minimizing catheter-related infections were spoken of.

Activities of the AUA South Central Section were mentioned in relation to Mexico and Central America by Dr. Charles Logan who pointed out that approximately 248 urologists from Mexico are members of the AUA through that Section.

Educational collaboration was exemplified by introductory courses to laparoscopy given by the Mexican Society of Urology in conjunction with the Mexican College of Urology which show promise of increasing in the years to come.

AUANews will have an edition in Spanish every four months beginning in April 2009. The next SMU Congress is scheduled for November 2009 in Monterrey, Mexico.

The AUA greatly values and appreciates the contributions of the Mexican urologists.5

The AUA's continuing education medical programs are well-remembered in Mexico such as the program "Latest Urological Techniques in the USA" which was promoted monthly in the Journal of Urology and in which urologists from Mexico and other countries had the opportunity to spend a month and a half to three months in the United States as fellows.

The attendance of nearly one thousand urologists from Spanish speaking countries to the pre-congressional course headed by Dr. Shlomo Raz the day before the AUA Congress speaks of its success. These conferences in Spanish can now be accessed on the AUA website under the heading International Programs.6

Dr. Antonio Puras Baez from Puerto Rico appears as the editor of the Spanish edition in the May 2009 publication of AUANews.7 International diffusion of urology over the internet will undoubtedly be of great benefit to all Spanish speaking urologists.

Once again we give our thanks and recognition to Dr. Terry D. Allen and Dr. Paul Schellhammer for their excellent international work as professors of urology, for their interest in Continuing Education Medical Programs for urologists from Mexico and the rest of Latin America and for their influence on world urological forums from the positions they have held in the AUA. We have no doubt that our academic relations and friendship will continue to develop and prosper. We wish Dr. Anton J. Bueschen, the new president of the AUA, a successful term and express our desire that the disposition of openness and communication of American Urology with Latin America and in particular, with Mexico, be maintained.
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