In Memoriam

Prof. Hirotaro Narabayashi

Dr. Manuel Velasco Suarez

Victims of September 11, 2001

The Proceedings of the 13th Meeting of the World Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery, held in Adelaide, Australia, September 11–14, 2001, are dedicated to the memory of two pioneers in stereotactic surgery who have recently passed away. Both have contributed significantly to the development of stereotactic surgery and to establishing it as a respected science. From the personal standpoint, both have held a significant place in my heart and in my professional development, and it is with sadness and nostalgia that we commemorate these volumes.

Professor Hirotaro Narabayashi passed away on March 18, 2001. Not only was he the first in Asia to develop a program in stereotactic surgery, but independently developed the concept in isolation of what had recently preceded him elsewhere in the world. He was influential in the acceptance of surgery for treatment of movement disorders and had a loyal following of disciples not only in Japan, but everywhere stereotactic surgery was practiced.

Hiro was the host of the seminal meeting in Tokyo in 1973 of what began as the International Society for Research in Stereocencephalotomy but ended as the First Meeting of the World Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery. Although various fractions had divergent ideas about how the society should be organized, he was influential in bringing everyone together to work for the common good. It was at that meeting that he took me aside, just five years in practice, and pointed out that the moving forces behind the Society had been Ernest Spiegel, who had retired, and Henry Wycis, who had died the prior year. He was concerned that the Society needed someone to take on the responsibility to keep it in tact during the upcoming changes. Despite my feelings of being perhaps too junior to assume such a role, he encouraged me to do so and rallied the other senior members of the Board to support that. Consequently, he exerted a larger influence on my professional life than is generally known.

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Dr. Manuel Velasco Suarez died on December 2, 2001. He was indeed an inspirational individual. I first met him also through Drs. Spiegel and Wycis forty years ago. He also was an important figure in establishing the role of stereotactic surgery within the realm of neurosurgery and neurology, not only in Mexico but throughout the world. He saw things from the global perspective. His elegant intellectual approach to the social and organizational role of stereotactic surgery led him also to other important social endeavors as governor of the state of Chiapas and Nobel Peace Prize winner as a moving force within the International Organization of Doctors for the Prevention of Nuclear War. I had the honor of attending his inauguration as governor and of experiencing his warm friendship throughout the years.

We cannot dedicate the Proceedings to the memory of those departed without also remembering those who died on September 11, 2001, while we watched on CNN from the other side of the globe. Despite the intensity of the distraction, the meeting would not succumb to the goals of those who wished to bring the free world to a stand still. The compassion and sincere involvement of colleagues from all over the world was noteworthy, and the outpouring of sympathy of the Australian people made us proud to be part of this band of international friends. The international world of stereotactic surgery has always held a close knit brotherhood. It is true that adversity cements friendships, and the closeness of mood and mutual support displayed in Australia during a time of crisis will never be forgotten.

We start the new millennium with a tinge of sadness for those pioneers who will not share it, but look eagerly toward the exciting advances in stereotactic and functional neurosurgery that dawn before us.

Philip L. Gildenberg, MD, PhD