

# Latin America Salutes the Society for Pediatric Pathology

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The Latin American pediatric pathologists represented by the Sociedad Latinoamericana de Patología Pediátrica (SLAPPE) congratulate a medical society born in the north but whose influence has extended to the southern-most point of our America.

The Society for Pediatric Pathology (SPP) was born 50 years ago as a friendly club. The Pediatric Pathology Club was its name, and George Fetterman was its 1st president. Thanks to the work of pediatric pathologist pioneers this club grew over the years to the internationally recognized Society we see today.

Confronted with the need to reach as many pediatric pathologists as possible, a journal dedicated to the diseases of infants and children was envisioned. This idea became reality in 1983 and under the leadership of William Blanc: a new journal with the title of *Pediatric Pathology*, currently named *Pediatric and Developmental Pathology* (PDP), was born. Fighting for recognition, it faced a hard road ahead, but with the tenacious determination of its editorial board it saw doors opening as time went by. Attracting better and better works and accepting only the best, it grew to become the most prestigious pediatric pathology journal in the world.

Colleagues and friends from Latin America were embraced by the Society and by the editors of PDP and some were invited to become members of the board. Works describing their experiences on different topics were presented at SPP meetings and published by the journal. This collaboration stimulated exchange of knowledge and experiences. Prestigious pediatric pathologists, researchers, and teachers from different corners of our continent visited each other's countries and enjoyed the personal contacts.

Friendship and professional exchanges are always seeds for new adventures to blossom, and 35 years ago a new pediatric pathology society was born. On October 1981, when a group of pediatric pathologists were attending a pathology meeting organized by the Asociación de Hepatología de Costa Rica—and under the leadership of Jorge Piza (Costa Rica), Cecilia Ridaura (Mexico), Jorge Las Heras (Chile), Maria Teresa García de Dávila (Argentina), Mario González Pineda (Costa Rica), Gilberto Vargas Segura (Costa Rica), and Eduardo

López Corella (Mexico)—the basis for the SLAPPE was established [1].

Enthusiastic pediatric pathologists from many other Latin American countries joined in 3 years later, in 1984, when Jorge Las Heras, SLAPPE's 1st president, organized its 1st International Conference in Santiago, Chile. After that, many cities in different Latin American countries hosted other meetings, and members of the Society for Pediatric Pathology and the Paediatric Pathology Society (PPS) and other societies were invited to participate. Many prestigious and world-renowned pediatric pathologists, such as Daria Haust, Enid Gilbert-Barness, and Benjamin Landing, to mention a few, have participated in these meetings and enriched them with their presence and experience [1]. Collegiality flourished during those congresses, and pediatric pathologists demonstrated a keen spirit of camaraderie, friendship, and readiness for any task (Figs. 1,2).

The SLAPPE, dedicated to the progress and promotion of pediatric pathology among Latin American pathologists, has worked to carry its mission through academic and scientific meetings. As the field of pediatric pathology in Latin America matured so too did SLAPPE, and its recognition by international colleagues and institutions flourished; it is now a member of the International Pediatric Pathology Association. As a companion meeting of the Sociedad Latinoamericana de Patología (SLAP), our sister society, SLAPPE, has joined SLAP to hold biannual meetings since 2007.

The SLAPPE authorities and its members are committed to maintaining the prestige of the Society as a pillar of professionalism recognized everywhere in Latin America and to carry on the spirit imprinted by the Society's visionary founding members.

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## REFERENCES

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**Figure 1.** The podium was always shared by gifted speakers, among them Carmen Gutierrez in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2000 (A) and María Teresa García de Dávila (B), Ricardo Drut (C), and Liliane Boccon-Gibod (D) in Riberáo Preto, Brazil, 2006. The meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay, in 2007 reunited SLAPPE and SPP members Jorge Las Heras, SLAPPE's 1st president (E); Eduardo Ruchelli (F); and Carlos A. Galliani (G). In Antigua, Guatemala, in 2009 some of the speakers were Frank Gonzales Crussi (H), Luc Laurier Oligny (I), Marta Cohen (J), Irene Scheimberg (K), Cecilia Ridaura-Sanz (L), and Rocío Peña (M). Maceió, Brazil, was the seat for the meeting in 2011, and once again excellent speakers joined SLAPPE, among them Miguel Reyes-Múgica (N), Pauline Chou (O), Mariana Cajaiba, Virginia Capó (P), and Elena de Mateo (Q), the present SLAPPE Secretary. A color version of this figure is available online.

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**Figure 2.** Not only were the conferences the highlight of the meetings. Participants and colleagues were also involved in heated discussions (Ángeles Rodríguez, SLAPPE ex-secretary, and Eduardo López Corella in Antigua, Guatemala; 2A) and



friendly chats (Waney Squier and Robert Ruiz in Antigua, Guatemala; **2B**). Banquets reunited old friends and colleagues, as seen in Punta del Este, Uruguay, in 2007 (from left to right, seating: Moises Espino Durán and his wife Norma, Miguel Reyes-Música and M. Alba Greco; standing: Carlos Manivel, Beatriz De León, María Teresa García de Dávila, Cristina Díaz, and Eduardo López Corella; **2C**). At the meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1996 the banquet counted among the participants SPP members Derek DeSa, Edwina J. Popek, Joel E. Haas, and Eduardo Ruchelli (**2D**). There were other activities, such as attending a Tango Show (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2000; **2E**) or relaxing after enjoying shopping, as our European friends Rita Alaggio, Irene Scheimberg, Waney Squier, and Marta Cohen did in Antigua, Guatemala (2009; **2F**). And of course, there was always time for a souvenir picture (from left to right: Miguel Reyes-Música, Rita Alaggio, Ángeles Rodríguez, Fabiana Lubieniecki, Pauline Chou, María Teresa García de Dávila, Ricardo Drut, and Maria Teresa De Seixas), as participants posed after an accomplished session in Maceió, Brazil, in 2007 (**2G**). A color version of this figure is available online.