

2023 Academic Ceremony Speech

Discurso del acto académico 2023

Authorities of: National Academy of Medicine, Argentine Society of Cardiology, Argentine Foundation of Cardiology, Argentine Journal of Cardiology, Colleagues, family, and friends.

Today, I assume the presidency of the Argentine Society of Cardiology (SAC), a high responsibility that I hope to carry out satisfactorily.

I thank all those who supported me in this difficult but honorable task for giving me this opportunity; I will not disappoint them.

I will tell you a brief story about my origins, which will help you understand the honor and joy I feel as I assume this position.

My roots are very humble. My grandfather, a Syrian immigrant, began to earn his living selling combs and hair combs using a Syrian accent and ended up burning garbage in the furnace of the Municipality of the City of Buenos Aires. Maybe that is why my grandfather, even with his bad pronunciation, sang “la marchita”.

My parents, Zulema and Enrique, had no choice but to live with my grandparents in the chorizo house in the neighborhood of Boedo. My sister Victoria and I were born there; each family had only one room.

My years at school were characterized by a terrible behavior, with absolutely no dedication to study. With my dear friends of those days, Tito, Rubén and twenty others, we just wanted to play football, and since we lived only five blocks away from San Lorenzo Club, we were eager to play the role of parking attendants when “El Ciclón” was playing.

Nowadays, I admire the great effort and the categorical arguments that my Dad used to make me change my attitude.

My father sorted letters at the Central Post Office, and later worked as a collector for a cosmetics company. He used to insist me to go to San Lorenzo club to practice different and more productive activities than the ones I was doing at that time. Finally, I listened to him and chose judo, a practice that had the advantage of learning how to fight, something I was looking forward to at the time, especially beating the big guys.

At that time, besides practicing judo, I met other friends -Napia, Ovich, Rafa, Beto, el Fasu, Caru- and then I magically began to study, and was in the honor roll in high school. I entered the School of Medicine and after graduating, I became resident and chief resident in an institution that was just around the corner

of this building, indeed, it depended on the National Academy of Medicine: the beloved Pombo Foundation.

My tribute to my parents for having completed my career and to this country that gives the emerging classes the possibility of training.

I started in the SAC a long time ago with the biannual cardiology course, and believe me, I was astonished when I saw this structure. In 2000, I began participating in the Council on Hypertension (CAHTA), which at that time was characterized for being very selective, and this was not fair for many people. With Alejandro Delucchi, Olga Páez, Pablo Rodríguez, Marquitos Marín, Laura Brandani and Diego Fernández, we sought to change it into an inclusive board. While I was director of CAHTA, Dr. Tajer commissioned me to organize an international course for the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on the management of hypertension in primary healthcare teams. With this task we learned a lot about timing and quality of presentation in virtual courses, and how to achieve international links.

Later, I recall, and I am grateful to Guillermo Fábregues for his generosity in offering me the position of Pro-Treasurer on the Board of Directors. Those were economically critical times for our society, but during those two years we worked in team to recover it.

Sometime later, Miguel González and Ricardo Migliore asked me to coordinate the Districts Area and to implement a reform. We carried out a “regionalization” with Fabiana and Rodrigo, represented by rotating conferences in each district so that each region would create its own program and be self-supporting. This plan was successful, and nowadays we count with 10 regional conferences.

I was immediately appointed Coordinator of Areas for one year, and before finishing this position, my friend Héctor Deschle offered me the position of General Coordinator of the 2020 Congress, an enormous challenge.

We started off well, and when COVID-19 emerged, no one believed in that “little flu”, so we continued with the congress program. The program was ready by June, but we had to fully redo it, as it had to be transformed into a virtual event.

Then, the last twelve former presidents of the institution trusted in me and elected me first vice president.

The previous story serves as introduction of what I wish to communicate: the SAC does not put limits on anyone, each person -this was my experience- can meet people, change structures, learn and have fun at the same time. One person has his or her own limits. SAC belongs to its members.

The main intention of our team is to continue and promote the University Institute as the backbone of medical education, and to strengthen the councils, backbone of our structure, and districts, which are 35 nowadays; Santa Fe district was the last one to be created this year. A few years ago, the participation of the districts in the annual Congress was 9% and is 30% now. The Congress technical secretariat has been conducted by members of the districts over the last three years, and the director of the flagship course, PROSAC, is from La Rioja.

The concept and motto that characterizes us is an inclusive and open-door SAC.

We are creating a funding to support our own research.

Our obsession is to increase the participation of young professionals; we are projecting a future SAC for the next 10 years.

We are also aware of the back-and-forth interaction with international and national societies, so the proposal is to strengthen these relationships while paying attention to reciprocity.

Another pending goal is to improve our working conditions by interacting with the College of Cardiolo-

gists and opening up to health policies.

In addition, we must improve the administrative area, making it more efficient and professional.

I would like to make a special mention to my five children Yamila, Federico, Emiliano, Sebastián and Julián for representing the miracle of life. When I saw them for the first time my heart knew no bounds, thank you for supporting me in this profession. Also, for meeting Olga, who insisted on not letting me down, for her shrewdness, her unconditional support and for walking by my side along this path that led me to the presidency.

Finally, I want to say thank you very much, I hope we have a spectacular year, say goodbye to the committee that is leaving, I will miss you all, especially Héctor who worked with me on the Board of Directors in 2016, 2021 and 2022 and from whom I learned many things, just as I learned from Alejandro Hershon one year ago.

I also bid farewell to Verónica Wolberg and Héctor Santa María who had an excellent participation in our project.

I am grateful to the staff of the Society for their work, and particularly to Marina for her efficiency and dedication.

Thank you, and I hope we win on Sunday.

Dr. Claudio Majul

President of the Argentine Society of Cardiology