
OBITUARY

Ventura Ferrer

Marco A

Editor de Revista Española de Sanidad Penitenciaria

Someone, long ago, perhaps twenty-five or thirty years ago, first told me about Ventura. I was then looking for correctional physicians interested in HIV infection. “Talk to Ventura, in Galicia” they told me. After that conversation we were introduced for the first time. Later we would meet many other times: at the Society’s events, in the infectious diseases group meetings, in research projects... We were never what you would call “close friends”. I have never met his family and we have never shared our workplace, for instance. We only saw each other from time to time. Yet I felt considerable affection for him and I believe this was reciprocal. Actually, as I write these lines, I can’t help imagine his bright eyes and his sly smile while he sardonically added something to the conversation. The Ventura I knew was cautious and reserved as well as humorous, realistic and intelligent. As the Galician proverb says “*velas vir, deixarse ir e parar a tempo*” (see it coming, get carried away and stop in time).

I remember him a thousand and one ways. I can recall him chairing the Society Days back in 2011 in Orense, discussing with our colleagues, in scientific

meetings or surprising us all with a brilliant lecture on syphilis in a *Critical Review of Literature* not so long ago in Madrid. I can remember you Ventura, but there is no way of doing so but fondly and affectionately.

In May this year I missed you in Cartagena, in our latest Congress. I commented on your absence with some colleagues and we thought that other work duties had kept you from coming. I heard nothing that could make me believe that you were sick. Another example, the last, of your reserve. However, surprisingly, almost two months after this Congress, in July, I received a message telling me you had passed away. The news stroke me, in a brutal way. I felt what you usually feel when someone relevant leaves, after the strike, the memories come and that need for a last conversation, that I would have loved but never happened. “Desolate” answered a colleague to the news. That is how I felt Ventura: desolate and empty.

I know I can scream and grieve, but that will not fulfill your loss. I’d rather fill this space, and specially my mind with your memories. You knew how to make yourself loved, Gallego.