



MANUEL G. LIM, MD (1930 – 2007)

The Strong-Willed Win-Win Practitioner and Bon Vivant

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Dr. Manuel Lim was Chairman (1991-1994) during one of the most tumultuous times in the UP College of Medicine. Being part of the administration, he had no other recourse but to follow the dictates of the UP Administration. The faculty and staff of the Department, having decided to side with the Dean of the UPCM refused to teach during the period. Dr. Lim, although publicly stating the demands of the UP officials, did not impose nor apply any sanctions on any of the “striking” faculty members. Such was the resiliency of the man that he was able to maintain the steadfastness and cohesiveness of the department during this tempest.

While it can be claimed that it was the late Dr. Vicente L. Santos who conceived the formation of the Temporal Bone Dissection Laboratory, it was Dr. Lim who formalized its structure. The Ear Institute, initially envisioned during the term of Dr. Armando Chiong, Sr., took a more concrete form during his watch. He made representations with then PGH director Dr. Felipe Estrella to allocate to the proposed Ear Institute the clinical spaces it occupies now. He even made arrangements with Dr. Suzuki to donate some of the required instruments the institute might need. But foremost of all, he made representations with then Senator Francisco Tatad to sponsor a bill before the Philippine Senate for the creation of the Philippine National Ear Institute. This was the same bill that was re-filed in later congresses by Senator Loren Legarda. Thus, it can be said that it was Dr. Lim who took the initial steps towards making the Ear Institute a reality.

His love and zest for life is something that is beyond question. He knew how to live and really made every moment worth living in his heydays. But his love for Otolaryngology was something beyond compare. His dates with Otolaryngology could never be broken. Wednesdays at 7 AM were always reserved for the Ear rounds that he religiously conducted until his retirement. Thursday mornings would find him at the OPD presiding over the Ear clinic.

Such was the perseverance, dedication and commitment of the man, but he was such a smooth operator that only a few of us were aware of the things that he did for his love of Otolaryngology. Fewer still can even recall that it was during his term that the textbook BASIC OTOLARYNGOLOGY became a reality and was finally published.

Like Dr. Ejercito, he helped found the Philippine Board of ORL-HNS and even served as its secretary for a time. He was a man of *delicadeza* and was the first member of the board to inhibit himself from its activities when his children Margaret and Manuel, Jr. took the certifying examinations. He also proposed the adoption of a retirement age for members of the board who were hitherto members for life. Thus, he was also considered a sort of a maverick by his peers. He had always proven himself capable of going against the popular stance for what he deemed right in serving the long term interests of the department and the specialty.

Unknown to most of the beneficiaries of his actions, he was the person responsible for the formation and early development of a separate department of ORL at St. Luke’s Medical Center. Moreso, by sheer force of his personality, he single-handedly won accreditation of its residency training program by the PBOHNS. In exchange, he had to give up his chairmanship at St. Luke’s when the board adopted a policy restricting chairmanship to only one institution.

He retired from the department after his term as UP-PGH ORL chair and was practically unheard of since then. Why and what transpired is beyond our knowledge. We may only conjecture that having lived a full life, he may have come full circle and adopted an ascetic life.

This was, in a nutshell, Dr. Manuel G. Lim, a hard bargainer who knew how to compromise, resilient and fun-loving, a smooth operator but an effective one at that!

