



## IN MEMORIAM

Faustino López- Rodríguez, M.D.  
Assistant Professor- in- Residence of Psychiatry & Biobehavioral Sciences  
Los Angeles  
1961 — 2005

Faustino López embodied the best qualities that anyone would want in a son, a spouse, a friend, an academic colleague, or a doctor. In any of these roles he first and foremost conveyed goodwill, kindness and decency. In all of them he achieved excellence and dispensed boundless generosity. When we sadly lost him on January 20, 2005, many people from different life venues and places felt united by the sentiment of having lost someone who made us all feel esteemed and respected, supported and appreciated.

Faustino was born in Melilla, Spain. He spent his childhood and formative years in Madrid, where he attended the Autonomous University and received his M.D. degree in 1985. He then began postdoctoral work on sleep modulation of hippocampal rhythms with Elio Garcia- Austt at the Hospital Ramón y Cajal in Madrid and shortly after traveled to Los Angeles, California, to work under the direction of Professor Michael Chase in the Department of Physiology, UCLA School of Medicine. His early studies at UCLA formed the basis of his 1990 Ph.D. dissertation at the Autonomous University in Madrid. In Professor Chase's laboratory, Dr. López completed important studies dealing with the control of motor neurons during sleep and wakefulness. At the same time he produced seminal publications describing the mechanisms involved in controlling the twitches and jerks of muscles that occur during REM sleep. Later he expanded his research to pursue the important relationship between sleep and epilepsy. In his UCLA years, Faustino developed close personal friendships with mentors, collaborators and students, friendships that he nurtured and maintained until his death. He became well known and extremely respected within the sleep and epilepsy research communities, both nationally and internationally.

Although always devoted to basic neuroscience research since medical school, Dr. López underwent residency clinical training in Psychiatry at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute and Hospital, training that he completed in 1998. Not surprisingly, given his personal attributes and character, he became a wonderful psychiatrist and clinical supervisor with a seemingly effortless ability to care for patients and to teach physicians in training. As a natural consequence of his scientific and clinical endeavors, he joined the Faculty of the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at UCLA. He became interested in the relationship of sleep with depression and epilepsy, following in this broad context several paths of related research and clinical activities. He oversaw the psychiatric care of patients in the UCLA Seizure Disorder Center, and chaired the Committee on Psychiatry for a major multi- center NIH- funded randomized controlled trial of epilepsy surgery. In that capacity he designed and supervised the psychiatric evaluation and care of enrolled subjects, as well as the study of their psychiatric outcomes, the latter with the goal of ascertaining that an early successful intervention, whether surgical or pharmacological, prevents the development of adverse psychiatric, psychological, and social consequences of epilepsy. In this role, he championed the importance of collaborative relationships between psychiatry and neurology and was about to receive a joint appointment in the Department of Neurology. Dr. López was a co- investigator on an NIH- funded program project to carry out invasive microdialysis and electrophysiological studies of sleep on patients with epilepsy who were being evaluated for surgical treatment at UCLA, a project within which he studied correlations between human and animal data. Also, he published on the personality disorders

experienced by individuals suffering from intractable epilepsy. He is co- author of a paper (in preparation) on adenosine levels in the human amygdala during sleep and waking.

Studies in clinically depressed patients have shown that depression is rapidly-- albeit temporarily-- alleviated by sleep deprivation, whereas serotonin reuptake inhibitors require two weeks to produce a similar effect. Dr. López obtained an NIMH Career Development Award to investigate the possible mechanisms of that interesting effect in animals. While conducting animal research on serotonergic influences on mood and sleep, and by examining changes in hippocampal serotonin levels using in vivo microdialysis techniques, he showed that serotonin was highest during wakefulness, decreased significantly during NREM sleep, and further decreased during REM sleep. He also showed that sleep deprivation increased serotonin levels in the rat hippocampus, and proved the positive behavioral effects of sleep deprivation in an animal model of depression. He had recently initiated an investigation of the role of multiple brain areas, including the frontal cortex, in mediating those effects using c- Fos measures in sleep- deprived rats, a study that his laboratory colleagues are intent on completing posthumously for him. By means of depth electrodes in patients with epilepsy, he had also begun to examine the modulation of frontal lobe mechanisms of depression during sleep. He was combining these procedures with in vivo microdialysis and single unit studies of the frontal cortex, and had planned to submit a grant proposal to NIMH to further this work. He also was planning to incorporate functional neuroimaging techniques to his already broad scientific approach to problems of his interest.

For his devotion to research, his enthusiastic attitude towards teaching, and his caring and thoughtful demeanor as a psychiatrist, Dr. López became a much esteemed colleague to many academic researchers at UCLA. The same qualities endeared him to fellow members of the Sleep Research Society, American Academy of Sleep Medicine, World Federation of Sleep Research and Sleep Medicine Societies, American Epilepsy Society, International League against Epilepsy, and Society for Neuroscience.

Faustino championed generosity, one of his most characteristic qualities, to inspire others to do and become their best. It was patently clear to all that he was happiest when friends and colleagues achieved success. He was kind in the extreme to everyone, a source of inspiration and a most appealing role model for younger colleagues.

He was modest and enjoyed the simplest things in life. He loved the outdoors, especially the California Sierra Nevada Mountains where he and his wife Angela enjoyed backpacking. He also enjoyed bird watching, trips along the central coast of California, and visits to his family and neuroscience colleagues in Spain. He was an enthusiast of classical music, opera and music for the guitar, which he also loved to play. He was a voracious reader, intellectually curious and always eager to learn new things. Although Faustino had already accomplished much, it is obvious that his future scientific and clinical contributions held great promise that will remain unfulfilled. The abrupt interruption of his life is a tragic loss to neuroscience and to all of us who knew and loved him.

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Joaquin M. Fuster  
Javier Quintana  
Charles L. Wilson