

## IN MEMORIAM

**MANUEL VIAMONTE, JR., MD**  
**“Lymphographer-Lymphologist-Radiologist Extraordinaire” –**  
**Co-Founder of the International Society of Lymphology**  
**March 19, 1930 - January 15, 2019**



Dashingly handsome and charismatic, radiologist and Cuban emigre Manuel Viamonte, MD brought the excitement of the “invisible” and inaccessible lymphatic system to the attention of the international medical and scientific community as he “conspired” with

co-founder Alois Ruttimann in 1966 to launch a new discipline, organize international congresses to bring together clinicians and basic scientists, and form an international society to encourage collaborations and sharing of knowledge (and ignorance) about the lymphatic system. This new discipline they named “lymphology” – the study of lymph, lymphatics, lymph nodes and lymphocytes in health and disease, and 27 International Congresses (and many, many more satellite conferences) have been held since. The 2nd International Congress in the famed Miami Beach, Florida Fontainebleau Hotel, held in 1968 when Dr. Viamonte was ISL's second President and President of the Congress, was a truly memorable event intellectually, organizationally, and socially. The journal *Lymphology* was founded at that same time.

During the last half century, interest in all aspects of the lymphatic system – from genes to field work – has grown exponentially and expanded in many different directions and disciplines. Nonetheless, an emphasis on “imaging” the lymphatic system – from the initial lymphatic capillaries through to the central collectors – has remained a continuous theme progressing from direct oil contrast lymphography primarily used to stage lymphomas to multimodal imaging using gamma ray, light, heat, sound, X-ray, magnetism, and electricity as sources of energy to make the invisible system more visible and accessible to basic science investigators and clinicians approaching a wide variety of lymphatic and multisystem processes and disorders.

“Manny” left lymphology a little more than a decade after founding the discipline knowing that the field was on its own solid trajectory. He turned his efforts to make major contributions to angiography generally focusing on arteries and also veins throughout the body and on multimodal imaging, resulting in hundreds of peer reviewed publications in leading medical journals as well as books, atlases, and patents, providing continuing education to radiologists throughout the world particularly in Latin America. He continued his advocacy on behalf of Cuban emigres throughout his life. In his latest years, he contributed to the founding and administration of

Florida International University. He also traveled the world over searching for the secrets to long life visiting and interviewing centenarians in their local communities while also stressing the values of a spiritual life in his writings.

It was during this latter period, that Manny returned to Tucson. Over a sumptuous "pago frito" dinner in a local Mexican restaurant, we reflected on the growth of lymphology and particularly lymphatic imaging since its birth in Davos, Switzerland. He was pleased to see that lymphology had nonetheless retained the pioneering collaborative spirit of its original founders and discoverers. His was a life well lived.

#### SELECTED REFERENCES

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**Marlys H. Witte, MD**  
**Professor, Surgery, University of Arizona**  
**Secretary-General, International Society**  
**of Lymphology**

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Manual Viamonte, Jr., MD, was born on March 19, 1930, in Havana, Cuba, graduating first in his class from the University of Havana Medical School in 1955, with the highest honors. Following in his father's footsteps, he completed his internship at Calixto Garcia Hospital (Havana) and his Radiology residency at the University of Pennsylvania. He returned to Cuba in 1958 to practice radiology. During the Cuban Revolution, Dr. Viamonte was pressured by the revolutionary committee of the hospital to assume his father's role as Chair of Radiology at the University of Havana. He refused and upon being threatened, emigrated to the United States with his young family. He became a professor and later Chair of Radiology at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital. In addition, he served as Radiology Chair at Mount Sinai Medical Center from 1968 until 2003, making him one of the longest-serving medical Chairs in the US. In 2009 he was named Professor Emeritus at Mount Sinai Medical Center. His contributions to radiology and to healthcare globally have been manifold – he was a pioneer in cardiac and interventional radiology, developing numerous procedures and devices, authoring over 20 books and 250 published scientific papers, delivering hundreds of lectures worldwide and teaching countless radiologists over seven decades. Most recently, he played a leading role in the formation of Florida International University's Medical School as Associate Dean for International Affairs. Among his proudest accomplishments was to have been a third generation physician and that his two children, Ana Maria and Manuel

III, also became physicians. His grandson Manuel Viamonte IV is also a physician.

[Above additional biographical information excerpted from the Miami Herald, published Jan. 15-17, 2019.]

