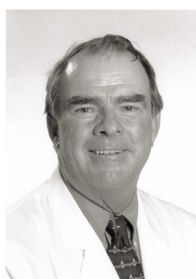


## In Memoriam

### Dr. Richard W. Light (1942–2021)<sup>☆</sup>



Respiratory medicine has suffered an irreparable loss with the recent death of Dr. Richard Wayne Light. Born in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, USA, in 1942, Dr. Light graduated in Medicine from Johns Hopkins University in 1968. In 1972, while still a respiratory medicine resident at Johns Hopkins, he described how to differentiate exudate from pleural transudate, determining criteria that made him famous and are still routinely used today. That was only the beginning of a long, sweeping research career in diseases of the pleura, his true passion. Most of his work was conducted at the Universities of California and Vanderbilt (Nashville, TN). His monograph "Pleural Diseases", first published in 1983 with six subsequent editions, has been a stimulus and an inspiration for many doctors. Rarely do scientific rigor and simplicity in style come together as perfectly as in Dr. Light's publications (more than 400). He actively participated in numerous editorial projects for medical journals and was a prominent member of the Archivos de Bronconeumología Advisory Committee. He gave lectures in about 60 different countries and, with his courtesy and charisma, generated an admiration bordering on hero worship. He was a tenacious

worker, combining ingenuity and humility, and a rare willingness to acknowledge the merit of others. He always offered his friends good advice, such as his famous five keys to professional success: be persistent, be organized, seek out win-win situations, adapt to the environment, and, the one he considered most important, sleep with the right person (something he did not miss out on, in the company of his beloved wife Judi). He received numerous awards throughout his life and was especially proud of his investiture as *Doctor Honoris Causa* by the University of Lleida in 2010, an occasion at which I had the privilege of giving the *Laudatio*.

In recent years, he braved the tribulations of age and fought against the eventual decline of his health. Sadly, fate, in the form of an accidental fall at home, has erased this privileged mind. In his modesty, he would perhaps object to such praise, but it is clear that, when speaking of pleura the world over, one cannot fail to name the great Light, who opened the floodgates, generating interest in this essential area of Medicine. Nor should his last generous gesture go unremarked: Dr. Light has donated his body to science.

It will be a very long time, if ever, before we see another pulmonologist with the same brilliance and values. But the best of his work will persist; transformed and perfected, it will continue to inspire his friends and disciples. Rest in peace, distinguished teacher.

José M. Porcel  
 Unidad de Medicina Pleural, Hospital Universitario Arnau de  
 Vilanova, IRBLleida, Universidad de Lleida, Lleida, Spain  
 E-mail address: [jporcelp@yahoo.es](mailto:jporcelp@yahoo.es)

15 May 2021

<sup>☆</sup> Please cite this article as: Porcel JM. Dr. Richard W. Light (1942–2021). Arch Bronconeumol. 2021;57:512.