



Leopoldo Flores-Romo (1954-2020).

I first met 'Polo' in 1986 when he arrived fresh from Mexico accompanying his wife Teresa who had secured a position in Biochemistry at the University of Birmingham. Himself jobless, Polo approached the then Head of Immunology, Ian MacLennan, expressing a wish to "do some Immunology" upon which he was pointed in my direction. In those early days I was certainly grateful for "an extra pair of hands". And what "hands" they turned out to be. Polo integrated seamlessly into the group, rapidly proving to be among the most energetic and passionate of scientists that I have had the privilege to know. A hallmark of Polo was his preternaturally infectious enthusiasm, fostering and engendering highly productive collaborations both locally and internationally. In 1990, Polo left Birmingham to join the Immunology Division of the Glaxo Institute for Molecular Biology, Geneva where he further flourished under the guidance of Jean-Yves Bonnefoy. Likewise, a highly productive couple of years at the Schering-Plough Research Centre with Jacques Banchereau in Lyon were followed by more of the same at the M.D. Anderson Center, Houston. Polo eventually returned home, joining in 1998 the Centre for Advanced Research, CINVESTAV-IPN, Mexico City though still engaging internationally, not least as a Visiting Professor to the Rockefeller Institute with the late great Ralph Steinman. For over 20 years, Polo worked tirelessly to further the cause of Immunology in his native country and, calling on his extensive network, promoted the placement of young Mexcian scientists in top research establishments throughout Europe & the USA. He organised national meetings of the Mexican Society of Immunology, his name ensuring the participation of stellar speakers from overseas. In recent years, Polo threw himself into outreach and public engagement activities at all levels while also developing a Medics-focussed Immunology Update Course adopted by several of the universities across Mexico. In the past year, he was elected to the ranks of the prestigious Sinaloa College, a rare and distinguished honour. Polo's legacy in the field of immunology and particularly his contributions to our understanding of B lymphocytes and dendritic cells is, and will continue to be, immense; not least through the cohort of highly talented students he has inspired and championed over the years. His published body of work is legion, including seminal papers in *Nature*, *Science*, *Immunity*, *J Exp Med*, *Blood*, *Immunology*, and *Eur J Immunol*, frequently as first or senior author. Often co-authoring with the leading lights in their field while abroad, there was certainly no let-up in publication rate, or quality, on his return to Mexico. The greatest legacy, however, is that of the man himself. All who knew Polo speak glowingly of his humanity, his immense passion, generosity of spirit, and of wonderful friendships. Polo passed away on Monday March 23rd with Teresa and Paola by his side. Our thoughts and love go out to them.

My thanks to Polo's many friends and colleagues who have shared their reminiscences with me with a particular mention to Jean-Yves Bonnefoy, Abbas Ghaderi, Rizgar Mageed, Thierry Defrance, and the 'other' Polo, Leopoldo Santos-Argumedo.

John Gordon

Emeritus Professor of Immunology
University of Birmingham