

Lucilo DÃaz FernÃ¡ndez: Science, spirituality, and total dedication in Los Palacios.

Description

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For more than four decades, Dr. Lucilo DÃaz FernÃ¡ndez (1907â??1972)â??a distinguished Freemasonâ??was one of the most beloved and respected figures in the municipality of Los Palacios. He earned this high regard and the sincere affection of an entire community through his extraordinary work as a surgeon, his spiritual and philanthropic outlook, and his unwavering, selfless dedication to the service of others.

Humble origins and an arrival shaped by history

Born in Artemisa into a poor family, Lucilo managed to qualify as a surgeon through his own intelligence and tenacity. He arrived in Los Palacios in 1931, at the age of 24, and established his first medical practice at the corner of JosÃ© MartÃ Street (now 21st Street) and SerafÃn GarcÃa Street (now 28th Street). He lived there until his death, alongside a Spaniard known as â??CaÃ±ita,â?• who served as a true guardian angel to him and his household.

His early days in the town were marked by austerity. As the Freemason Arsenio EchevarrÃa would later recall during his funeral eulogy at the Masonic Pantheon, Lucilo arrived with very few belongingsâ??owning only a single suit, which was quite worn and mended. The Bustillo-CalderÃ³n family took him in as one of their own; the women of the household would wash and iron his clothes every night, ensuring they were ready for him to wear the following day. At the same time, his elegant bearing, attractive features, and the color of his skin and eyes made him very popular with womenâ??he was a cheerful, womanizing young man before eventually settling down and starting a family of his own.

The year 1931 was defined by the shadow of the 1929 economic depression and the tyranny of Gerardo Machado. On August 11 of that year, the young doctor witnessed the transportâ??by cartâ??of the bodies of General Francisco Peraza y Delgado (of the Liberation Army) and several of his men to the former Rural Guard barracks, prior to their burial in the local cemetery. The elderly generalâ??a veteran of the 1895 War in that very region, where he had served under General BermÃºdez and later assumed command of the guerrilla forces following the latterâ??s removalâ??had risen up against the Machado regime at Loma del Toro; he was caught by surprise and shot dead at his encampment in

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Hoyo del Majagual.

A Sanctuary of Health and Spirituality

In time, Dr. Lucilo married DoÃ±a Clara DÃaz, a native of Artemisa, and put down permanent roots in Los Palacios. There, his five childrenâ??Tilo, Vicente, CarlÃn, Teresita, and Silvioâ??were born and raised; they are still remembered in the town for their childhood mischief and youthful escapades.

His home and medical practice were established on Antonio Maceo Street (now 23rd Street), next to the Hotel â??SoberÃ³nâ?• (later known as the Hotel â??FÃºsterâ?• and subsequently â??El PalaceÃ±oâ?•). A plaque on the front porch read: â??Dr. Lucilo DÃaz FernÃ¡ndez, Physician and Surgeon.â?• Adjoining the house was his well-stocked pharmacy, managed by Mr. Humberto Izquierdo, his wife Clara, and several young apothecaries.

His practice offered more than just diagnoses: it was a place where gastric lavages were performed to save children and adults who had been poisoned; minor surgeries were conducted; wounds were dressed; bone fractures were set in casts; and difficult childbirths were attended toâ??with only the most critical cases being referred to hospitals. He was assisted by two highly competent nursesâ?¦ Luis FÃºster Crespo and Mr. Salvador SÃ¡nchez; he was also a pioneer, installing the first X-ray machine in Los Palaciosâ??an instrument whose images he could interpret with great precision.

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True to the Hippocratic Oath that hung in his waiting room, he would answer the call of any patient, regardless of the hour or the severity of the weather. To reach the most remote rural corners, he traveled first by horse and later by jeep; in the line of duty, he suffered several accidents, including a broken leg.

In addition to compounding his own medicinal formulas, Dr. Lucilo was a committed spiritualist and a student of Rosicrucian principlesâ??pursuits he explored through long sessions of reading and meditation alongside the Venerable Brother Arsenio EchevarrÃa. In his medical practice, he combined science with the power of thought, a penetrating gaze, and psychological therapyâ??a blend that led many laypeople to affectionately call him the â??physician-spiritualist.â?•

Civic Life and Masonic Loyalty

His vocation for service also drew him into public life; he served effectively as the Municipal Mayor of Los Palacios between 1940 and 1944. He also owned a country estate at kilometer 4 of the road to Entronque de Los Palacios, a frequent venue for the banquets and political rallies of that era.

Regarding his Masonic affiliations, he applied for admission to the Worshipful Lodge â??Montecristiâ?• on November 6, 1936, at the age of 29 and still a bachelor. One of the brothers tasked with vetting his characterâ??the austere Venerable Brother Antonio ValdÃ©s ValdÃ©sâ??reported that, while he was â??somewhat fond of amusement,â?• he was nonetheless notable for his â??humanitarian approach to his profession,â?• and that any shortcomings he might have were â??capable of being corrected.â?• He was initiated on December 20, 1936.He was passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on February 5, 1937, and raised to the degree of Master Mason on March 19 of that same year.

Within the lodge, he held the positions of Assistant Secretary (1938), First Warden and Chair of the Finance Committee (1939), Second Warden (1941), Chair of the Finance Committee once again

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(1942), and Orator (1944, 1945, and 1946). Following the profound political and social transformations of 1959â??when the lodgeâ??s leadership at the time attempted to align the lodge with the new ideological movementâ??those members who championed traditional Masonic principles nominated the Worshipful Brother Lucilo for the office of Worshipful Master for 1960; he secured the position with an overwhelming victory.

Dr. Lucilo DÃaz FernÃ¡ndez never retired and continued to practice medicine for as long as his health permitted. He passed away on March 11, 1972, at the age of 65, leaving behind the indelible mark of an exemplary citizen, a faithful brother, and a true son of Los Palacios.

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