

Angel Arturo ABALLI Arellano

(Medical Doctor – Pediatrician)

By: Marcos A. Iglesias
Mississauga, Canada.

Master of Cuban Pediatrics. With this title Dr. Daniel Alonso Menéndez¹ lectured about Dr. Angel A. Aballí, father and founder of Cuban pediatrics, one of the foremost Cuban pediatricians of all times. Dr. Aballí led the practice and development of pediatric studies in Cuba. He brought them to a position of international recognition.

Dr. Aballí was born at No. 8 Tello Lamar St., in the city Matanzas, Cuba, on September 30, 1880. He was the son of José Manuel Aballí and his wife María de los Angeles Arellano². He completed his elementary studies at “El Siglo School”, and High School in his native Matanzas, and was an outstanding student (1895.) He earned his medical doctor degree *Summa Cum Laude*, at the university of Havana (1901), ranking first in his class.



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In view of his excellent record, the government granted him a scholarship to further his studies of medicine outside the country. This was the first time the Cuban government conferred this honor to a student. He worked and studied at different hospitals in Boston, Washington, Chicago and New York. Then Dr. Aballí went to France where he studied under professors Marfán and Newcombe. He also went to Germany where he studied under professor I will try to highlight many of his accomplishments.

As a student and Professor of Medicine at the university of Havana, Dr. Aballí's Baginski, and, finally to Italy. He returned to Cuba in 1904.

Rather than trying to write a panegyric of this pundit of Cuban medicine, records include:

- Assistant-student of Dissection Anatomy at the Forensic Medicine and Toxicology Department of the School of Medicine (1897).
- Assistant-student Toxicology and Medicine (1899).
- Assistant-student of Physiology (1900).
- Laboratory Chief and Assistant Professor of
- Histology and Pathological Anatomy (1905)
- Assistant Professor of Pathology and Clinical Pediatric (1906).
- Professor of Pathology and Clinical Pediatrics (1908).
- Dean, School of Medicine, University of Havana (1936-1940).

As a physician, he held the following positions:

¹ Conferences and studies of *History and Organization of Science*. Havana, April 1979.

² His mother's family name was Arellano, not Arenallano, as frequently misspelled in philatelic literature.

- Medical Director of the Children's Hospital, Havana (1936).
- Founder of the first medical services of Children's Clinic at "Our Lady of Mercy" Hospital, Havana, Cuba. (This hospital was popularly known as "Reina Mercedes")



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At this hospital, he pioneered several services performed in Cuba for the first time. They include: Otoscopy; use of children's cystoscopy; blood transfusions in children; lumbar puncture; studies of the cerebrospinal fluid; functional hepatic tests; determination of CO₂ in the alveolar air; study of alkali reserves by the van Slyke's method; study of blood protein by refractometry.

- He inaugurated a Nursing Ward, an Outpatients Services, a Dietetic Department and a Clinical Laboratory at the "Our Lady of Mercy".
- He founded the "Calmette" antituberculosis dispensary for children; the "Grancher" *preventorium* for nursing children; a children's ward at "La Esperanza" hospital for children with tuberculosis, presently renamed "Angel Arturo Aballí" and transformed into a General Pediatric Hospital.
- Technical Director of the "Municipal Children's Hospital" in Havana. This hospital is now the "Pedro Borrás."
 - As a member of the Cuban Medical Federation, Dr. Aballí actively participated as:
 - Vice-president of the IV National Medical Congress, 1917.
 - Director of the *Revista Médica Cubana* (Cuban Medical Magazine), 1918.
 - President of the Society of Clinical Studies of Havana, 1920.
 - Director of the Cuban Medical Association.
 - Director of the Society of Clinical Studies.
 - President of the VI National Medical Congress, 1924.
 - Founder, together with Juan Guiteras (q.v.), of the Cuban Medical Federation (October 15, 1925). He was the first President of the Federation.
 - President of the VI National Medical Congress, 1925.
 - President of the Cuban Society of Pediatricians, 1928.
 - Member of the National Council of Tuberculosis, 1936.
 - Founder of the Cuban Pediatrics Society.

Dr. Aballí received many honors and decorations in his prolific career, including the following:

- Correspondent member of the Medical Society of the Paris' Hospital.
- Correspondent member of the American Pediatric Society, 1924.
- Guest of Honor to the Conference of Teachers of Children's Diseases, Dallas, Texas, 1924.
- President of the Cuban delegation to the VII Latin-American Medical Congress, México, 1925.
- Member of the Cuban Academy of Medical, Physical and Natural Sciences, 1926.
- President of the V Pan-American Children's Congress, 1927.

- Honorary Member of the Medical Societies of Guayaquil, Ecuador; the Mexican Society of Pediatrics; the Pediatric Society of Uruguay; the Pediatric Society of Colombia; the Medical Academy of Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Grand Officer, Finlay's Order.
- Honorary Member of the Cuban Society of Pediatrics, 1946.

After the physical examination of one of his little patients in his office, he sat behind his desk to write a prescription. Suddenly, he crossed his arms on the desk, he reclined the head on his arms and, unexpectedly, died in Havana, Cuba. It was July 22, 1952. He was seventy-one years of age.