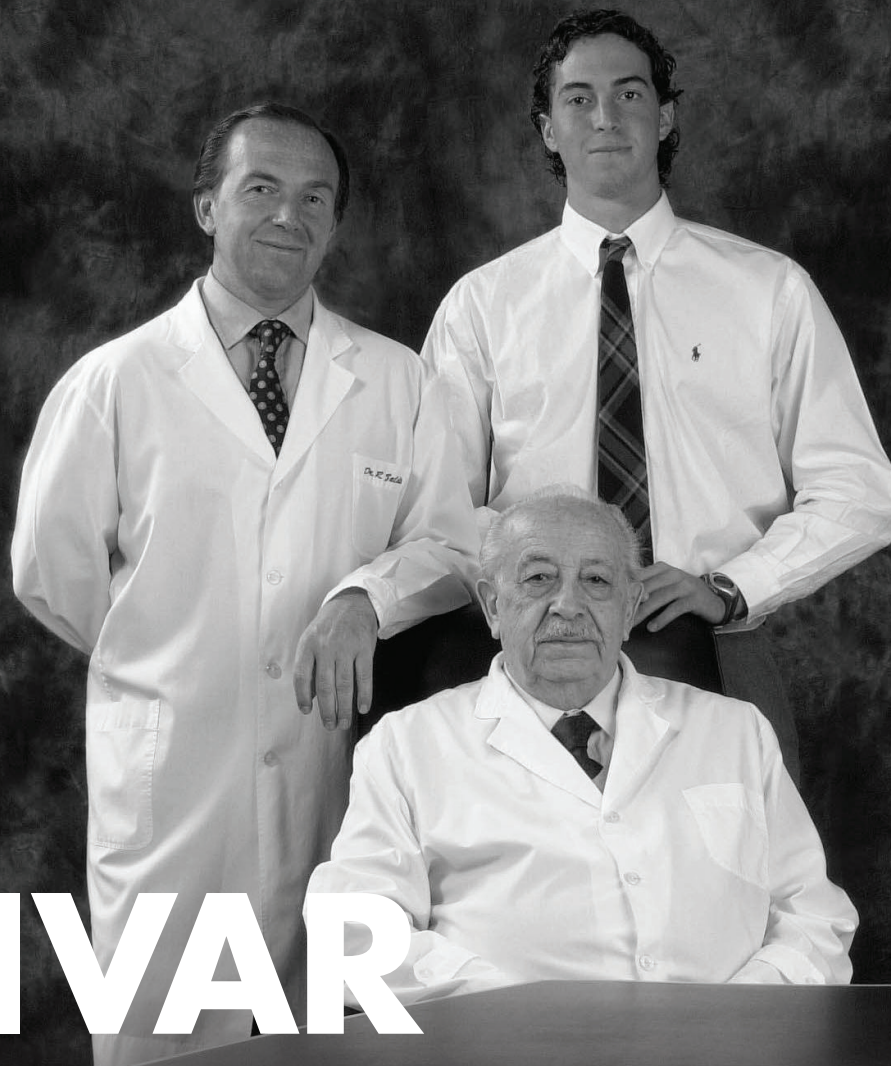


*Meet
the*

ZALDIVAR FAMILY



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MULTIGENERATIONAL WORLD TRAVELERS

BY ROBERTO ZALDIVAR, MD

It was a great joy to me when my son Roger chose ophthalmology as his career. (I probably experienced the same feelings that my father did many years ago, when I decided to follow in his footsteps to become an ophthalmologist.) The truth is that it would have been difficult for my son not to study medicine because he was born into and grew up in that environment (Figure 1). My father also had a great influence on him, and they shared many hours talking about topics in ophthalmology and situations that he experienced on a daily basis.

In his early childhood, Roger traveled with me or with his grandfather to meetings and lectures, listening and participating in the social activities that coincided with

ophthalmology-related travels. I could not help but think that this was similar to what I experienced with my father in my early years. Thus, Roger was raised among ophthalmologists and grew up in their environment. In fact, when he was only a medical student, many people thought he was already a board-certified ophthalmologist because they would encounter him at ophthalmology meetings worldwide. It turned out to be a natural process for him, as it was for me back in my early days.

DIVIDED DUTIES

Our work dynamic at the Instituto Zaldivar is complementary. The two of us work basically in the same field of cataract and refractive surgery, but in different areas; we also divide our duties when we travel to important meetings, in order to cover as much as possible. While I am mainly in charge of our hub in Mendoza, Argentina, Roger travels a lot and manages our branches in Buenos Aires.

Our working relationship is nothing but natural. Because of our family ties, all our topics and issues go home with us. This gives us an advantage over normal working relationships that are confined to the office. Our closeness, I believe, has allowed me to teach Roger some of those things that one does not find in textbooks or learn in traditional training, but rather in the reality of our daily lives. I hope I can adequately convey to him all of my experience from many years in this environment and offer advice on how to face everyday situations.

It is challenging to manage our many projects simultaneously, ranging from medical and scientific undertakings, to projects relating to technological developments, to organizational management issues and the expansion plans for our institute. All of this keeps our father-son team busy.

GREAT ON THE PODIUM

Roger communicates a lot better than I do. When he had only just graduated as an ophthalmologist, he spoke at several important congresses in Europe and the United States. I specifically recall one time in Paris when he managed himself naturally, despite his young age and lack of experience. He is great on the podium and has more patience than I do when it comes to discussing topics with others. In this sense, I am learning a lot from him.

Roger's software development regarding teardrop analysis has really made me feel proud of him. This is one of the many important things that he has become involved with. I am convinced that this new program will produce a big change in ophthalmology, and it is only at the beginning.

KEY DRIVERS

BY ROGER ZALDIVAR, MD, MBA

As a child travelling with my grandfather and father to all their ophthalmology meetings, I observed how much they enjoyed both their work and these trips. I had no doubts about choosing my career and being a doctor in the future.

My family was obviously influential when it came to selecting ophthalmology. I will always remember when my grandfather told me one day when I was small, "It will really be a pity if you choose medicine but don't specialize in ophthalmology. If you tell me that you want to be a dancer or whatever, I can respect that. But if you choose medicine, then you have to be an ophthalmologist."

FATHER AND SON, MENTOR AND MENTEE

So I selected the specialty of ophthalmology because of my father and grandfather, of course, but also because I realized that ophthalmology is unique among the medical specialties. It combines being able to see patients in clinical settings, being able to explore different technologies for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes, and having the chance to operate. Thus, it offered the three key drivers I was most interested in, and this made the choice easy.

I will always remember my first cataract surgery, performed with my father by my side. It was a stressful situation, but my father knew exactly how to walk me through the entire procedure, step-by-step. This was a special moment for me in the course of my training.

I am glad I decided to join the practice with my father. We have become a good team, with related but different fields of interest. We really enjoy working together, and we can each add value to what the other is doing.

There is a certain degree of challenge to working together with a parent or family, especially when it comes to establishing limits between your personal relationship and work. To a degree, my father has had to replace his role of parent with a mentorship role, and I my role of child with that of

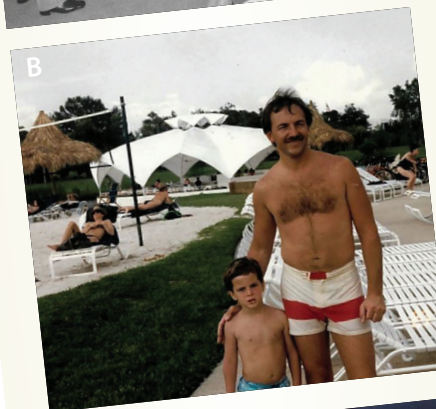



Figure 1. Roberto (seated in front row) assisting his father, Roger Eleazar Zaldivar, MD, (standing), in class (A). Roberto and Roger (B). 1996: Roger (right) and sister Maria (front center) with Johnathan M. Davidorf, MD (left), and his wife (back center) (C). Three generations of Zaldivar ophthalmologists (D).

a mentee, and then fully embrace it. We have tried to commit seriously to achieving this goal, and we have succeeded so far.

One advantage of this situation is that I can spend a lot more time my partner than I could with any other colleague in the world—because he is my father after all. We can share thoughts, discuss strategies, and allocate as much time as we need to work toward improving our efforts. Another advantage is that we have been able to multiply our time, so to speak, as we can subdivide the work between us. For example, when we go to meetings, we each concentrate on different topics, and therefore we can be more efficient and effective.

RECOGNITION AND PRIDE

One example of our effective process of working



"We can share thoughts, discuss strategies, and allocate as much time as we need to work toward improving our efforts."

together comes to mind. When my father delivered the Rayner Medal Lecture at the United Kingdom & Ireland Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons (UKISCRS) meeting in 2012, I helped him prepare his lecture. While he obviously had all the information he needed regarding his past and current experience in the development of phakic IOLs, I was able to enhance his talk with new contributions based on my work

and research with our team of bioengineers.

Plus, we had a lot of fun preparing it. Afterward, during the award ceremony, I felt proud that not only was my father being recognized by receiving this distinguished award, but also that I had contributed in some small way to it. ■