

Col. Richard Belcescu MD, turns 90 – A portrait

Adrian M. Nistor

I am a human being to whom very few opportunities have been offered in an entire lifetime or maybe I was not able to turn them to account when they popped up. But meeting retired Colonel Richard Belcescu MD, was for me what may be called a “chance,” a “stroke of luck.”

Immediately after graduating from the dentistry school of Bucharest, I was assigned to work in the surgery where Dr. Richard Belcescu worked busily, on the seventh floor of the Carol Davila Central Military Hospital. A soft-eyed middle-aged man came to meet me, dressed up to the nines, who, making no fuss over the whole thing, helped me get acquainted with the activity of the section. I was to discover subsequently that my then boss was one of the most outstanding human beings I was destined to meet. He tried to polish the numerous and serious irregularities of the personality of a young lieutenant doctor, who had just finished school. As a matter of fact he retained his capacity as a polishing creator of medical but also human personalities all along his stay at the OMFS section, exerting it on many young doctors.

Colonel Richard Belcescu, MD, was not very well known in public life: he gave no resounding interviews to the propaganda newspapers of the 70s and the 80s, and did not appear on TV. However, thanks to his qualities, he asserted himself as an opinion leader all the hospital staff held in high esteem.

Being side by side with him made you feel calm and protected at that time of turmoil. Endowed with much earnestness in all the aspects of his professional, but

also personal, life, Dr. Richard Belcescu was certainly the one colleague that “should be found in any clinic.” He used to solve everything inherent in a surgical team: he used to commit himself to solving some cases that required a special relation between the doctor and the patient besides surgery as such.

We kept in touch even if life and the difference of age made us stay apart from each other. He used to pay regular visits to me at various stages of my professional career, but he always tried to be as discreet and warm-hearted as possible, with no trace of conceit whatsoever. He was familiar with everything going on in our section but also in the whole hospital, getting emotionally involved in an extremely sincere manner.

I learnt by mere chance that he is in an old people’s home where his family have taken him very affectionately because of the marked difficulties due to old age. His being there certainly makes him benefit from remarkably good palliative care, which nobody else can better give.

Extremely impressed, I came near to the bed where Dr. Richard Belcescu lay: “Hi, Adrian! How are you? We haven’t seen for ages!” Frankly speaking, I was almost at a loss in that clean tidy room where one of my mentors was bedridden because of the lapse of time. We had a short genial conversation during which I found it difficult to suppress my emotion. All the unforgettable recollections of the events that kept us close together for many years came to my mind.

I left the sunlit room in which Dr. Richard Belcescu lives

now and promised to come and visit him from time to time. Being 90 – is it a long or a short time of one’s life? On the way to my surgery, where he came to visit me and where I had the honor of treating him, I remember part of the moments spent by the side of this

wonderful man. This is why I seem to hear again the words previously spoken: “In every clinic there must be a Dr. Belcescu” as a benchmark for medical rigors but also for the consummate behavior of a colleague.