

OBITUARY: FÉLIX GUILLÉN, THE SMILE AND THE CIGAR

José Carlos Jaenes¹

On 6 October, our colleague and friend Felix Guillen Garcia, Professor of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Those of us who had contact with him until his last days can say who carried the disease with enormous fortitude and often with notes of humor in such difficult times.

He was a pioneer in the field of Physical Activity and Sport Psychology (PASP), a field in which he began in the early 1980s, and was President and Founder of the Canarian Association in 1987. He also held the position of President of the Spanish Federation of Sports Psychology (SFSP) from 2003-2008, finishing his mandate at the Ibero-American Congress of PASP in Seville, where I remember him, as always, sitting on any step, on any bench, in relaxed conversation, smiling, with a black coffee without sugar and his cigar, with his biting point of humour, full of affection and a permanent smile. He was also the Founder and Editor of the Revista Iberoamericana de Psicología del Ejercicio y el Deporte (RIPED), opening a door for the publication of works to colleagues from Latin America, with whom he always maintained a fruitful exchange, allowing students and professors to stay at his University. He opened his door to doctoral students from American lands that he loved so much; his generosity brought well trained doctors where they were needed most.

His curiosity led him to do research in the theoretical and applied field since his teaching days at the University of La Laguna (1984-1992). He was the main researcher of different research projects, research in which one of his pioneer lines was the world of arbitration and sports judging, a field that was completely virgin at that time. Since 2002 he was responsible for the Research Group of Sport Biopsychology, Physical Activity and Health at his University. Author of several books and book chapters, he published nearly 80 scientific articles and collaborated with important Spanish, Portuguese, Brazilian, Mexican and American colleagues, such as Bob Brustad and Deborah Feltz, with whom he did research stays and who keep a fond memory of his time at the University of Denver (Colorado) and Michigan State University, respectively. Other research stays took him to Bolivia, and to several European countries: Portugal, France, Germany, Italy and Romania, as well as to some Spanish universities. Likewise, he was a member of different international professional associations such as FEPSAC, ISSP and NASPSA, although he had a direct relationship with many other international associations from different countries.

A lover of his Canary Island land, a tireless traveller, he visited remote places. I remember one of his last trips to Indonesia, where he photographed himself enthusiastically with the natives of the islands and the famous Komodo dragons. It was one of our last conversations where he spoke enthusiastically about the trips he wanted to make in the future.

At the ISSP World Congress in Seville in 2017, he could be seen greeting the many colleagues with whom he was working. We have been known and loved for so many years of dedication to Sports Psychology. The graphic testimony that I keep in my memory is, as always, sitting on the benches in the university courtyard, chatting, with his coffee and his cigar that leaves us with an indelible memory of a dear friend, a prolific colleague who published, already ill, his last work at the FEPSAC Congress in July 2019, which he was unable to attend.

Rest in peace my friend Felix, there is nothing better than having left a mark of your passage through the world, a mark that makes me remember you with a smile. As the Romans used to say: May the earth rest lightly on you! We miss you.

1 Correspondence: José Carlos Jaenes, Dpto. Antropología Social, Psicología Básica y Salud. Universidad Pablo de Olavide. Sevilla. E-mail: jcjaesan@upo.es