Saulo Klahr was a brilliant, cultured man; a physician who excelled in both clinical and basic medical research.

He was born in 1935 and raised in the small town of Santendar, Colombia. When Saulo was still in high school, he shared an experience with many of us. He read Microbe Hunters, and from that point on, medicine and medical research would be his chosen fields. Graduating from the Universidad National de Colombia School of Medicine at the top of his class, he remained in Colombia for 3 years of clinical training and then embarked on what proved to be a life-changing event. Saulo decided to become a nephrologist and moved to the United States, where, being a graduate of a foreign medical school and speaking less than perfect English, his hopes for a career in academic medicine had to be regarded as a long shot.

In 1966, he visited me at Washington University in St. Louis hoping for a fellowship. This was a moment when nephrology was a new field with enormous potential and fellowship candidates were plentiful. Ordinarily and for the times, Saulo would have been given a hospital lunch but not a fellowship; however, in our meeting, something about him caught my attention, perhaps it was a feeling that he had the right qualities to grow scientifically as well as clinically... or perhaps it was his determination to put his heart and soul into his work. Anyway, he got the job.

The first day Saulo arrived at Barnes Hospital, I was out of the country and a senior fellow showed him around and then told him that it was his turn to see the next patient. The patient was an African American who spoke no Spanish and Saulo spoke a little English. Welcome to the United States. But he was undaunted and did a commendable job of working up the patient, including making the correct diagnosis.

More quickly than I had anticipated, Saulo also proved himself academically and took the first steps toward what would be an illustrious career. We began working closely together at the bench with frog skins, turtle bladders, shark red cells, and the coupling of aerobic and anaerobic metabolism to ion transport. Midway through his fellowship, he had to return to Columbia because he was on a student visa, and under the auspices of the Rockefeller Institute in Colombia, he published some stellar observations on starvation.

When he later returned to Washington University, he became a gifted and talented basic physiologist. As I left St. Louis, Saulo was the unanimous choice to be the next division chief and would soon receive an endowed chair. During his life-long tenure at Washington University, he trained more than 100 young nephrologists, gave invited lectures, and traveled as a visiting professor to countries throughout the world. His work emphasized membrane biology, focusing on ion transport and its coupling to metabolic pathways; he also made im-
portant contributions to the pathophysiology of urinary tract obstruction, the pathophysiology of chronic renal diseases, and the control of fluid and electrolyte homeostasis. Who will forget his leadership of the now classic study “The Effects of Dietary Protein Restriction and Blood-Pressure Control on the Progression of Chronic Renal Disease” published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1994?

Not the least of his accomplishments was his tenure as editor-in-chief of Kidney International and the American Journal of Kidney Diseases, two of the most prestigious journals in the world of nephrology. Finally, Saulo was an established investigator of the American Heart Association; a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (London); the recipient of the David M. Humes Memorial Award from the National Kidney Foundation, the Thomas Addis Award from the International Society of Renal Nutrition and Metabolism, the Edward N. Gibbs Award from the New York Academy of Medicine, and the President’s Medal and John P. Peters Award from the American Society of Nephrology. He also served as president of the American Society of Nephrology, the National Kidney Foundation, and the American Society of Renal Biochemistry and Metabolism.

In his long and successful career, he moved from a first-year fellow to a full professor—from an aspiring scientist to a gifted and talented basic physiologist, a membrane biologist, and a cell biologist. In addition to his numerous honors, he and his collaborators published a staggering 540 papers. Saulo’s sons, James and Robert, whom he adored, recently gave an anniversary party to Carol and Saulo in celebration of their 44 years of marriage, something that meant a great deal in his declining years. According to Carol, Saulo also had many interests beyond medicine. He was an avid reader of the magical realism school of literature by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a collector of Colombia’s renowned school of contemporary art, a regular attendee of the St. Louis Symphony, and an avid collector of friends around the world.

A gentleman’s gentleman, Saulo was an original, and we will miss him for who he was and the fine legacy he left to all of us.

DISCLOSURES
None.