

## **The Tragic Death of José María Cagigal** President AIESEP 1968-1983

By Maurice Piéron, Université de Liège and John Cheffers, Boston University

José María was born in Bilbao, in Northern Spain and soon became a force in Spanish Physical Education. He was founder of INEF (The Instituto Nacional de Educación Física) in Madrid in 1966 and headed that Institute for at least a decade. He was internationally renowned as a sport philosopher and sport psychologist in addition to his excellence work in cultural activities such as art and music. He possessed a beautiful tenor voice, often serenading colleagues at professional gatherings. A gentle, humble man, José María, made friends easily, travelled extensively and promoted the cause of Physical Education with sensitivity and strength. His assumed the Presidency of AIESEP during the Madrid conference in 1968, succeeding the inaugural President, Madam Surrel, who began her duties in 1962 in Lisbon.

The 7th of December, 1983, will be remembered as the day on which, José María Cagigal, popular AIESEP president, perished. President Cagigal was en route to preside at the International Congress of AIESEP in Rome, December 8-11, 1983. His plane, which was taking off in heavy fog at Madrid's International Airport, collided with another airliner making an emergency landing. Two of his colleagues, Felipe Gayoso and Juan Fernandez, travelling on the same flight were killed also. This collision accounted for at least 93 deaths and was a national tragedy. His passing shocked and saddened the large audience assembled in the National Italian Olympic Committee's Rome site.

His death promoted numerous awards, honours and expressions of appreciation.

His wife, Isabel, received the gold medal of the Royal Order of the Sport Merit from King Juan Carlos I, a necklace of the Order of the Olympic Committee was presented by his great friend, Juan Antonio Samaranch and the AIESEP board of directors commemorated his memory with the Institution of the Cagigal Lecture at each major AIESEP conference assembly.

*Asumió la presidencia de la AIESEP durante la conferencia de Madrid en 1968, sucedió a la presidenta inaugural, la Señora Surell, que había asumido sus obligaciones en el año 1962 en Lisboa.*

*La muerte de Cagigal fue homenajeada con numerosos galardones, honores y expresiones de afecto. Su mujer, Isabel, recibió la medalla de oro de la Real Orden del Mérito Deportivo de manos del Rey Juan Carlos I, su gran amigo Juan Antonio Samaranch regaló un collar de la Orden del Comité Olímpico y la Junta Directiva de la AIESEP conmemoró su persona con la institución de una disertación sobre Cagigal en cada Asamblea General de Conferenciantes de la AIESEP.*

*La intención de esta publicación es conservar esas disertaciones y honrar a Cagigal con una reunión de los pesamientos y de los escritos de los eruditos. Las disertaciones se recopilarán y publicarán aproximadamente cada diez años. Aunque la generosidad y el encanto personal de José María Cagigal se han perdido en gran parte, sus colegas y sus numerosos amigos de todo el mundo lo recordarán y, de este modo, honrarán a un gigante de la Educación Física y el Deporte. Por este motivo, la AIESEP promueve la excelencia de las Ciencias y las Artes y muestra sus respetos a la familia por tan grande pérdida.*