

## Founder - Jorge Roa Martínez

### “Scientia et Technica pro Humanitate sub Libertatis Tutela”

Dr. Jorge Roa Martínez was the first Principal of the Universidad Tecnológica Pereira. He was elected to this position on the 16th May 1960 by the then Mayor of the city Emilipo Vallejo Restrepo. From the end of the 1940s on Dr. Jorge Roa Martínez worked relentlessly towards the realization of his great dream – the construction of a University for Pereira. This dream finally became a reality at the start of the 1960s.

Dr. Jorge Roa Martínez was born in Guateque (Boyacá) on 28th March 1891, he completed his PhD in Law and Political Science at the Universidad Nacional and although still young he assumed the post of Government Secretary for Boyacá in 1924. He was also nominated Governor during the Presidency of Marco Fidel Suárez and acted as Boyacá's Representative to the Chamber.

He did not arrive in Pereira until around the year 1926 and it was here that he met and married the distinguished Tulia Drews Castro. Dr. Roa Martínez was above all a man of great sensitivity and humanity with an acute sense of civic duty. We could go as far as to say that he was one of the most important citizens to have passed through the city of Pereira in the sixty years since its birth.

He was one of the founders of the Rotary Club and in the course of his lifetime he occupied the most important senior positions within this organisation. In addition to this he was twice National Governor of the Rotary Club; champion of local Rotary initiatives and one of the best Rotary members in the country. All this at a time when there was but one Rotary district.

In 1943 he became involved in the brilliant initiative to build the San Jorge Hospital and two years later was a vocal participant in the construction of the Matecaña airport.

From 1941 to 1946 he was president of the Society for the Improvement of Pereira in which time he instigated a rigorous programme of citizenship. After 1946 he stayed on as a member offering his vision, insight and wisdom to the organization.

In 1947 he was elected governor of Boyacá for a second time, his message to the Assembly is a noteworthy discourse in it he articulated the foundations for economic development that that illustrious part of the country enjoys today.

His significant cultural and intellectual education led him to declare that “a people without education is like a body without a head”. He also published essays such as the Infra-revolution in the Arts; The social and economic implications of Tax; On Mexican Mural Painting; the Evolution of Panamericanism, to name but a few. He directed, wrote the prologue to and defended the project on the History of Pereira (a contribution made by the Rotary Club in 1963 for the centenary of the city). In the interval between 1953 and 1954 he was elected Governor of the Rotary District for the second time taking on once more the

Presidency of the Club in Pereira. He was awarded important distinctions such as the Cross of Boyacá in which he was ranked as an outstanding officer. He also received the José María Córdoba medal, the José María O' Higgins award in Chile and that of Citizenship in 1954. He received distinctions from the society for Public Reform (S.M.P.) and the award of merit from the Rotary club amongst others.

In 1957 he was President of The Honourable Supreme Tribunal of the city of Pereira, a position he held for one year before assuming what was to be a life long yet triumphant struggle for the establishment of the Universidad Tecnológica Pereira. In his thirst to make his vision a reality he left no leaf unturned, consulting every educational institution, using every University Council meeting as the opportunity to discuss the way forward. His cause took him to the door of every President of the Republic, he presented his plans at every meeting of Congress until he, along with his associate Guillermo Angel Ramírez and the many illustrious representatives and Senators of Pereira, secured the passing of Law 41 in 1958 and Law 85 in 1968. These latter constituted fundamental elements to the establishment of the Universidad Tecnológica Pereira.

Jorge Roa Martínez was founder of Universidad Tecnológica Pereira and Principal from the moment of its inauguration in 1960 until his death on 17 April 1966. He also contributed to the formation of the Instituto Técnico Superior and other educational organisations.

As mayor of Pereira he was charged with the honour of planning the centenary celebrations that began 13 years in advance of the event. He had the foresight to identify the problems the city would experience in the future. As mayor he submitted a dossier of nine projects complete with justification; amongst these were the Hydroelectric Plant in Dosquebradas, The Mayoral Palace, the university and the town planning strategy. This list of priorities constituted the way forwards and the means to successfully combat the latent demands of development that were already evident at that time.

**Fuente:** <http://www2.utp.edu.co/english/banner/23/founder-jorge-roa-martinez>