

CLUB DEL PROGRESO A BRIEF HISTORY

The oldest existing club in Argentina, the Club del Progreso, was founded in May, 1852. The battle of Caseros, a decisive event in the series of civil confrontations that plagued Argentina in the first half of the Nineteenth Century, had been fought in February of that year. His victory permitted General Urquiza to convene all governors to the City of San Nicolás where basic agreements reached made possible the meeting of a national Constitutional Convention in 1853 and the approval of the country's present federal Constitution.

Supporters of Urquiza in Buenos Aires formed this Club to provide him with a suitable forum for the negotiations with the different political currents that had to be represented at San Nicolás and in the Convention.

Its by-laws state as its objective "the meeting of men and ideas". For one hundred and fifty seven years the Club has been loyal to this aim. From its foundation until 1912 it was one of the few places where government and opposition leaders could meet, ignoring for a while the very rough political ways of the time. And for that reason, some of the most important political compromises took place in its premises.

Sixteen active members of the Club became the Nation's presidents from 1853 to 1942.¹ Two other active members, Raúl Alfonsín y Fernando de la Rúa became presidents in the last decades of the Twentieth Century.

The Club also served as a catalyst for the creation of other private institutions which have played important roles in Argentine life such as the Bolsa de Comercio de Buenos Aires, the first Argentine Masonic lodge and the Jockey Club with its stud book.

Since its foundation the Club hosted many of the most important world personalities who visited Buenos Aires such as the then Prince of Wales and future British King Edward VIII, the philosophers José Ortega y Gasset and Hermann Count Keyserling, the composer Giacomo Puccini and Spanish Captain Ramón Franco who, as commander of the hydroplane *Plus Ultra*, united Europe with South America for the first time by air. The Italian tenor, Enrico Caruso, perhaps the greatest opera singer of all times, sang at the Club on August 12th, 1900.

Today it is a cultural institution that houses a library open to the public and offers courses of history, art, music and literature and projection of operas and movies complemented with explanations and debates.

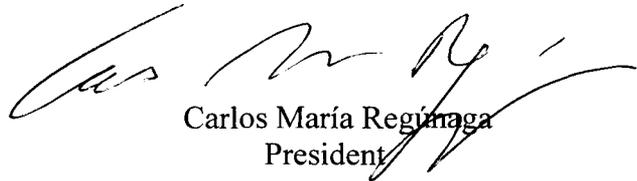
Its *Foro de la Ciudad*, consists of a series of luncheons with keynote speakers whose lectures, always followed by a debate, deal with a very heterogeneous list of topics. Inaugurated by the then Buenos Aires Mayor, Julio César Saguier, on April 1st, 1985, it has hosted every Wednesday, year after year, political and social leaders, political and

¹ Justo José de Urquiza, Bartolomé Mitre, Marcos Paz, Domingo F. Sarmiento, Nicolás Avellaneda, Julio Á. Roca, Carlos Pellegrini, Luis Sáenz Peña, Manuel Quintana, José Figueroa Alcorta, Roque Sáenz Peña, Victorino de la Plaza, Hipólito Yrigoyen, Marcelo T. de Alvear, José F. Urriburu y Roberto M. Ortiz.

economic analysts, academics, artists, military officers, journalists, philosophers and other intellectuals.

The Club has also received the visits and heard the speeches of many foreign personalities, including several ambassadors of the United States and other nations. It should also be noted that the Club organized the fund-raising that made possible the construction of the memorial dedicated to General José de San Martín in Washington D.C. inaugurated on October 28th, 1925.

Its headquarters, a French-style town-house, is a milestone of the transformation of Buenos Aires from a colonial Spanish town to a modern city. It was designed and built in 1911 by architects Hary and Lanús. Hary and Lanús were the founders of the School of Architecture of Buenos Aires, later transformed into the School of Architecture of the University of Buenos Aires. In 2007 the Club received the “Diploma Testimonio Vivo de la Memoria Ciudadana”² in recognition of its efforts to maintain the building in its original conception and style.



Carlos María Regánaga
President

² The diploma can be found in this site.