

Ann Marie Oconnor
Los Angeles, California

I became aware of the importance of the clinic when I was a UPI reporter in Guatemala in the early 1980s. I covered the assassination of one clinic worker by the army, which was engaged in a scorched earth campaign against the guerrillas that targeted noncombatant social service workers, educators, clergy, and pro-democratic forces. It shows the risks the clinic was willing to run to try to bring health services to the people. And the courage of Dr. Behrhorst, who I spoke to in those days, and who was also putting his life on the line.

I learned that social progress cannot be stopped by destructive political forces.

Inspired by this and other examples, I have one on to write about social justice issues throughout my career.

The barefoot healer concept pioneered by Dr. Behrhorst went on to become a model for delivering health services in rural Latin America