

Obituary: Horácio Carlos Panepucci

Professor Horácio Carlos Panepucci passed away on 21 October 2004 after a short period of illness. He was born in 1937, in Argentina, and obtained a degree in Physics at the *Facultad de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales* of the *Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires*, where he taught until 1966. He resigned his appointment and went abroad in protest after an invasion of the university by police troops, which was ordered by the military government. At this time, he was a member of the *School Consejo Directivo* representing the graduated students.

He settled in Brazil where he obtained his PhD in a joint program between the *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* and the *Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Físicas (CBPF)*, becoming a research fellow at CBPF. In 1970 he joined the recently founded *Instituto de Física e Química de São Carlos (IFQSC)*, University of São Paulo, as an Assistant Professor, and becoming a Professor in 1981. He made relevant contributions to the development of this new Institute. Prof. Panepucci taught theoretical and experimental courses, at undergraduate and graduate levels, with special attention to the creation of the teaching laboratories, to this day a jewel in the Institute. He always made clear his pleasure for, among other joys, being the *Professor Homenageado* (honored professor) by the first class of students graduated from the IFQSC. He was the advisor of 24 graduate students, besides supervising the work of several undergraduate students and post-doctoral associates, most of them nowadays holding relevant positions in academia and industries around the world.

As a researcher, he was a specialist in the field of spectroscopy, mainly Electron Spin Resonance and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance, investigating basic aspects of condensed matter. Later, he moved to medical applications of Physics, in particular Magnetic Resonance Imaging and Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy. In both areas he is recognized as a pioneer worker in Brazil and in Latin America. His research work on Basic Physics gave rise to about 80 peer-reviewed articles published in scientific journals, books and annals of international conferences, which got more than 200 citations including extensive references in textbooks. In the area of Applied Physics, besides journal articles, the main result was the pioneering development of Magnetic Resonance Imaging and Spectroscopy in Brazil, which resulted in the development of a complete MRI/MRS scanner for clinical use in 1998/99. This system is one of the most striking examples of the transfer of results of basic research to society with direct benefits.

His experience abroad involved positions as Research Assistant at the Physics Department of the University of California (UC) in Berkeley (1967-68), Research Associate at the Physics Department of the UC in Santa Barbara, Visiting Professor at the School of Medicine of the UC in San Francisco, and in universities in Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Argentina and Cuba. For a short time he had a position at the *Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Físicas, CBPF*, in Rio de Janeiro. He was also a member of the board of directors of the Academy of Sciences of São Paulo. He was a fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and a research fellow of the Brazilian National Research Council, CNPq. He was a member of the editorial boards of *Crystal Lattice Defects and Amorphous Materials* and the *Magnetic Resonance Reviews*. He served in committees of several scientific organizations: the Brazilian National Research Council, CNPq, the São Paulo State Research Foundation, FAPESP, and the Inter-American Development Bank (PADCT-Program).

Professor Panepucci has also left his distinctive mark on almost every administrative position at his Institute and at the University of São Paulo. During one of his terms as Director of the IFSC, he was appointed by the University Council as a Deputy Rector. In his own words, Panepucci believed that during the 31 years of his scientific career, which almost fully corresponds to the very age of his Institute, he helped his colleagues to make it the magnificent school it is today. He helped to build the fine infra-structure and quality of its programs and research, but mainly contributed to establish the high standards of mutual respect that guides the relationships among its members, and which allows to extract from every individual the best contribution that he can give to the University. Panepucci had a very direct way to approach all sorts of problems, even the most intricate, and a special sense of humor. When he learned about the seriousness of his illness and was informed that many colleagues were concerned and wanted to visit him in the hospital he said "I can't promise I will hold on that long, but I can be assured of a well attended memorial service!" Keeping the sense of humor was the last lesson that our master taught us as he was facing the unavoidable.

We all sincerely mourn his disappearance.

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