



Prof. Dr. Décio Rodrigues Martins

Goodbye, Dr. Décio. We deeply thank you!

“Perseverance is the key to success, nothing is impossible for the man impelled by intrepid believes!”

*Décio Rodrigues Martins,
in interview for Dental Press (October, 1996).*

With a life marked by happiness, delight and accomplishments, Dr. Décio Rodrigues Martins rested after an intrepid journey. He passed away on the 29th of May, after five years of an unceasing battle trying to keep alive a heart that made many others beat fast, in a rhythm of intensity and enthusiasm. Innumerable people in his family, students, colleagues, followers and friends, remain full of gratitude for the intense life this man lived, accomplishing his mission in his “own way” — as in the lyrics of his favorite song.

By paraphrasing Socrates, he claimed to be satisfied with his journey: “The secret of having a happy death is having a happy life!” Being face-to-face with death, he repeated many times: LIFE, I THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Dr. Décio always claimed that what we take from this life is the good we do to others and the emotional ties we build along the way. Professor Décio leaves a valuable legacy of personal and professional values.

He was oftentimes excessively demanding, unseasonable, impetuous, tempered and brave. If he was demanding towards his children, grandchildren and students mainly, it is because he had always dedicated himself considerably. Should he not see the development of

one’s potential, he would become furious. He had a lot to give. Valuable exchanges between him and his students truly fed his professor’s soul which was combined with a father, provider, and protector figure.

He overwhelmed everyone he met not only with his family ties which were beyond blood ties, but also with the science and the art of Orthodontics. Nevertheless, he emanated and taught excellence in teaching by means of valuing discipline, severity, good domain of Portuguese and general culture, always improving his intellect, his reason and his way of living: with wisdom and humbleness, especially when acknowledging his own mistakes. He always had plenty of love and generosity to give, as these were peculiar to him.

He was pleased and proud to say that many Brazilian orthodontists had been his students or students of his former students. Therefore, they were his “children” and “grandchildren”, directly or indirectly. Along with his great partners, pioneers in Brazilian Orthodontics (Dr. Muler de Araujo, Dr. José Édimo Martins and Dr. Décio’s closest friend, Dr. Sebastião Interlandi), Dr. Décio Rodrigues Martins has directly or indirectly influenced the lives of many generations of professionals.

I once read a quite old text written by Dr. Interlandi, which impressed me very much. In his text, he expressed his wish to make Orthodontics available to barefoot boys. We owe the popularization and diffusion of Brazilian Orthodontics to these four men who were at our disposal to teach Orthodontics beyond their clinics, democratizing their clinical practice and allowing competition to improve quality and promote research and education initiatives.

Within a global context, Brazilian Orthodontics is surely one of the best in the world. I would dare to claim that no other country makes good orthodontic treatment available for such reasonable price.

We will miss Dr. Décio's first classes, in which he used to present the history of both national and international Orthodontics. We felt we were very privileged pupils who were inserted in an invincible and indefatigable militant group of "sculptures in vivo"! At first, he would congratulate us for having chosen the Orthodontics field, convincing us that we would have a magnificent professional future — following the steps of those who had established our path and taking care of the legacy to which these great men devoted their lives, leaving their sublime example to us.

When I became aware of my grandfather's case, knowing that it was irreversible and that it had been aggravated in the past days, I called Dr. Interlandi who went to visit him in hospital. Their friendship as well as their closeness was always heartwarming. But in the end, at this last moment, the feelings they had for each other opened the doors to what my grandfather meant by "what we take from life". A remarkable moment, inexpressible in words. There are fissures in time and space, moments when only silence may express what words cannot. Nevertheless, at this moment, I attempt to share my feelings towards the last lesson I learnt from these two partners who have strongly influenced our lives in many respects.

Keeping Dr. Décio company in hospital was an extremely significant lesson! He gave classes while he was sleeping! He asked questions such as: "What are the mouth appendages?" I answered: "The teeth!" He was given excruciating injections in his abdomen and when the nurse entered the room saying it was time to do so, he said: "Let's go for it!" He underwent physiotherapy as if he was working out, until his last day. He was so humbly gallant. His last words to me were: "I have noticed I am getting worse, but we must remain resolute until the end!"

A colleague of his mentioned on Facebook, where many heartwarming farewell tributes were rendered, in capital letters: BRAZILIAN ORTHODONTICS IS IN MOURNING! How should we go into mourning, face our sadness for losing and missing him, and move forward with Dr. Décio's vivacity?

Quoting the philosopher Antisthenes, Dr. Décio used to say that: "Gratitude is the memory of heart". We are certain that he lived his life completely and happily, and this comforts us. The steps we have to follow are strong and the legacy he left us is extremely valuable. His thunderous voice shall echo forever in our affective memory, making many hearts beat fast, freeing us from inertia, encouraging us to improve in personal and professional matters, acting as the propelling spring of Brazilian Orthodontics.

We affectionately surrender to the Lord this great source of inspiration, great father, grandfather and great-grandfather of many students and followers, someone who has contributed to the lives of many. Everything that could have been done was done. Everything that could have been said was said. All hugs were given. The journey comes to an end with plenitude and peace!

The opportunity of paying tribute to Dr. Décio, preserving and keeping his memory in Brazilian Orthodontics is the best way of being in mourning for Dr. Décio as he would like us to do. Dental Press Journal of Orthodontics is indeed the most appropriate place to do so. For being one of the main supporters of this Journal, Dr. Décio was the first person to be interviewed.

He lives in every person who was inspired and welcomed by his life. We have never felt more fraternized by his lessons, his example, the impression he has left on our lives, the valuable legacy he has left to us, by our pride for having him as our preceptor and certainly, by his absence.

Deep is our mourning because incommensurable is our lost, but immense is our love. Gratitude is certainly the greatest feeling we have: GOODBYE, DR. DÉCIO. WE DEEPLY THANK YOU.

Maria Fernanda Martins-Ortiz Posso