

IN MEMORIAM

PROF. DR. CARLOS DA SILVA LACAZ, MD, PhD - 1915 - 2002



Prof. Carlos da Silva Lacaz, a founding Editor of the “Revista do Instituto de Medicina Tropical de S. Paulo” died suddenly on April 23 after being operated upon for an apparently localized form of Merkel cell tumor. His death shocked all of us, particularly those who, like me, had had that exceptional privilege of being one of his disciples and friends. An enthusiastic and hard worker, Prof. Lacaz only stopped his routine and research work a few days before his surgery. His body was cremated and the ashes buried in the garden of the Medical School, under a plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*), similar to the one where Hippocrates lectured his disciples on Cos island, ancient Greece.

Prof. Lacaz was born in Guaratingueta, S. Paulo state, Brazil, and received his medical degree from the S. Paulo University Medical School in 1940. He became Professor

of Microbiology and Immunology at the same school in 1953. The many papers, lectures, graduate and postgraduate courses, and seminars can hardly illustrate the degree of personal commitment to the University and society that Prof. Lacaz maintained and believed in. A disciple of the late Prof. Floriano Paulo de Almeida who, together with Adolfo Lutz and Alfonso Splendore, made seminal contributions to the mycology and pathology of Paracoccidioidomycosis, his main field of research was medical mycology. Many papers on Paracoccidioidomycosis and Lobomycosis among other mycoses of medical interest were published by Prof. Lacaz and his team, earning him the status of renowned international investigator in this field. Recently, as a tribute to his work, *Paracoccidioides lobo* was renamed *Lacazia lobo*. His book on Medical Mycology, with many editions, is a reference for all who work in mycology. His contributions led FAPESP (“Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de S. Paulo”) to list him among the most important Brazilian scientists of the last century in his field.

Prof. Lacaz was Dean of our Medical School (1974-1978) and the Nursing School (1978-1982). New positions for the staff of the medical school were obtained during his term, creating better conditions for teaching and research at the institution. He was also founder (1959) and Dean of the S. Paulo Institute of Tropical Medicine, where he was the head of the Section of Mycology, an institution he loved so much and which now bears his name.

Prof. Lacaz was deeply attached to our Medical School and was a strong opponent of an Institute of Basic Sciences

dissociated from the applied disciplines in medicine. However, his point of view was never an obstacle to collaborative research projects between that institution and our Medical School and/or the Institute of Tropical Medicine. Together, he and other professors created laboratories of clinical investigation in the Hospital and the Medical School, substantially improving the level of applied and basic research among us.

Prof. Lacaz was also interested in the History of Medicine and was a founder of the Museum of History of our Medical School, which also bears his name. Also as part of his social commitments, he was Health Secretary of the S. Paulo municipality for few years.

Prof. Lacaz was married to Dinah Maria Martins Lacaz and had one daughter and three sons. He had eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Prof. Lacaz was extraordinarily willing to share his knowledge and took great satisfaction in seeing others advance it. For those who knew him, he will be remembered as an amiable man with an engaging sense of humor who was a beloved mentor to students, junior staff members, and to visiting scientists. Most of all, he was a great friend and will be greatly missed.

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