Henrique Leonel Lenzi

(★ 1943 †2011)

Obituary/Necrológio

Henrique Leonel Lenzi was born in Nova Prata, a small town of Italian colonization in the Serra Gaticha, and was a grandson of Italian immigrants from both sides. From the years of his childhood through his youth, he spent in Catholic seminaries and cathedrals. He remained his command of Latin and Greek, and the conviction of his inability to become a priest. He has opted for another kind of priesthood: to reduce the ignorance and to seed kindness wherever life took him. To support himself in Porto Alegre during his course of medicine at the Faculdade Federal de Ciências Médicas, he worked at night-time jobs as roadway inspector and post office clerk. While student, he fell in love with and married Jane Arnt, who became his lifelong companion, colleague and collaborator.

Henrique Leonel Lenzi was a scientist always ahead of his time. Henrique Lenzi has developed several novel mathematical models, used the latter with the collaboration of Prof. Rita Zorzenon, from the Department of Physics, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco. He took advantage of his natural leadership skills to transform the Department of Pathology of the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz from a dusty unity into a scientific center of excellence, attracting to it hundreds of Brazilian and foreign scientists. Special care was given to the formation of scientific skills of talented youngsters, some of them transformed into renowned scientists. Under his guidance and inspiration, the members of the Department of Pathology acted as a great and united family, where the problems and difficulties of each one were shared by the whole group. The atmosphere of opportunities, friendship and egalitarianism - a reflex of Lenzi's own personality - that prevailed in the Department was such that the daily scientific sections were attended by all members of the ‘family’, from the post-doc researchers to the lady cleaner.

Carlos Graeff Teixeira

On the afternoon of November 25, 2011, Henrique Leonel Lenzi, a scientist always ahead of his time, Henrique Lenzi has developed several novel mathematical models, used the latter with the collaboration of Prof. Rita Zorzenon, from the Department of Physics, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco. He took advantage of his natural leadership skills to transform the Department of Pathology of the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz from a dusty unity into a scientific center of excellence, attracting to it hundreds of Brazilian and foreign scientists. Special care was given to the formation of scientific skills of talented youngsters, some of them transformed into renowned scientists. Under his guidance and inspiration, the members of the Department of Pathology acted as a great and united family, where the problems and difficulties of each one were shared by the whole group. The atmosphere of opportunities, friendship and egalitarianism - a reflex of Lenzi's own personality - that prevailed in the Department was such that the daily scientific sections were attended by all members of the ‘family’, from the post-doc researchers to the lady cleaner.

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After years of courageous fight against the lymphoma, Henrique Leonel Lenzi was defeated by the disease, leaving behind his wife Jane, his son Henry, and a multitude of friends, former students, and admirers immersed in profound sadness.

Carlos Eduardo Tosta