

THE DEPARTURE OF A BRAZILIAN MASTER OF GASTROENTEROLOGY

Rezende Filho J. The departure of a Brazilian Master of Gastroenterology. *Arq Gastroenterol.* 2015;52(2):81-2.

On January 26, 2015 at the age of 93 years and 8 months, one of the major exponents of Brazilian medicine, Prof. Dr. Joffre Marcondes de Rezende, passed away. Gastroenterologist, professor, researcher, writer, humanist, great scholar of medical language and history of medicine, an example for an entire generation of doctors. Everyone that could enjoy his conviviality recognized the living expression of simplicity, sympathy, the professional and scientific seriousness of a rare humanistic culture.

Born in 1921, in a small city in the state of Minas Gerais, Piumhi, graduated in medicine at the Faculty of Medicine of National University at Praia Vermelha, Rio de Janeiro, in 1950. Already during graduation revealed his spirit as a researcher, when he described the “Supine hypotension syndrome in pregnancy”. Initially, he practiced medicine in the town of Bela Vista, Mato Grosso, Brazil’s border with Paraguay, for 2 years. He returns to Rio de Janeiro for a specialization in Gastroenterology with Prof. Júlio de Moraes. In 1954, moved to Goiânia, at this time, a young and small capital in Central Brazil.

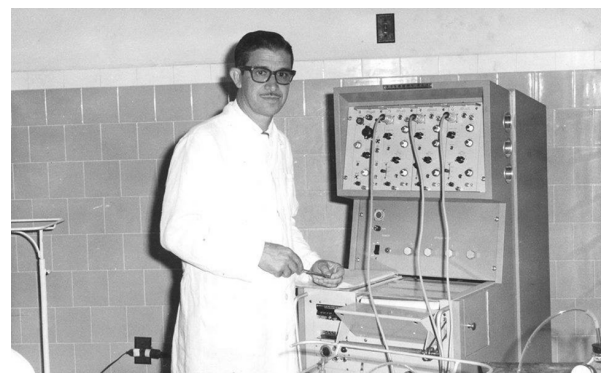
When he arrived in Goiás, he faced the high prevalence of endemic megaesophagus and this fact motivated him to deeply study the disease over the

course of 40 years of research. His studies were crucial in the recognition of the digestive disease manifestations of Chagas’ disease. In 1956, on the basis of clinical and epidemiological data established the relationship between Chagas disease and the endemic megas (esophagus and colon), following, in 1959, the proposal of the recognition of the digestive form of Chagas disease. In 1960, on the basis of expressive case series, proposed the radiological classification of Chagasic esophagopathy in four groups, including the anectasic forms. His contribution to the knowledge of the digestive manifestations of Chagas disease was so recognized, that lead the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, in 2009, in celebration of the centenary of the description of the disease, to include his original work “Megaesophagus caused by Chagas disease”, among the 15 most relevant studies published in 100 years on this affection.

Highlighted as acting teacher and trainer of specialists. He was a Professor and founder of the Faculty of Medicine from Goiás Federal University (UFGO), headed the Medical Clinic Department for several years, and held the Office of Deputy Director. During the military dictatorship, by taking independent positions, could not take the Director position of



Dr. Joffre in his library, 2012



Performing his manometric studies near 1960

*Gastroenterology Service, Department of Clínica Médica, School of Medicine of Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG).

the College, contrary to the expressed wish of the faculty staff. Structured and led the service of Gastroenterology and digestive endoscopy of the Hospital das Clínicas from UFGO, having contributed in the formation of large number of experts, especially as his pupils, among others, Prof. Dr. Heitor Rosa and Prof. José Abel Ximenes, who succeeded him in the leadership of the respective services. Even after his retirement in 1987, never turned away from the teaching and scientific guidance. In recognition of his significant contribution, the Federal University of Goiás honored him with the title of Professor Emeritus. The Endoscopy Center of Hospital das Clínicas, in recognition tribute, received his name. Another academic recognition he always prided himself, was the title of Professor Honoris Causa of the University of Brasilia, for his contribution to research at the respected institution.

He was founder and editor of the “Revista Goiana de Medicina” for 35 years, and coordinator of the Federal University of Goiás publishing house, in the period from 1982-1987. His dedication into reviewing and editing led him to be interested, too, in the study of topics of medical language. Published the book “Medical Language”, in four editions, with comments on etymological issues, which mostly arose from doubts of other colleagues, who questioned the best way to express. This book is unique in the genus in Brazil, and became a source of mandatory consultation to many who engage in writing medical texts. Used in their research of medical Philology, his impressive collection of dictionaries, with more than 250 volumes, in several languages, including all published in Portuguese, especially with Edition from Lisbon in the year of 1818.

His passion for the study of the Portuguese language and its correct application in medical language, led him to maintain a page on the internet, in which several of his texts are available on the subject (<http://www.jmrezende.com.br>). Until around his death, remained always available to answer questions from doctors and students who often visited the page, task that he executed with extreme satisfaction.

Another topic that really interested him and stirred passion was the history of medicine. Became founder of the Brazilian Society for the History of Medicine, which contributed in its organization. Already retired, and as a volunteer, introduced the discipline of history of medicine, at the UFG Medical School, which he ministered with enormous affection and devotion, convinced of the importance from the historical knowledge on the evolution of medical art in the integral formation of future doctors. Realizing the lack of appropriate teaching material for students, organized a

handout with the themes of the course. Hence the idea, the organization of books about the history of medicine. The first published was “Sombra do Platano” by the UNIFESP Publisher, with chronicles on the history of medicine. The cover of the book features the tree from the Island of Cos, photographed by him. Then, answering the invitation from the editor of the UNIFESP, published a translation into Portuguese, directly from the original, the “Hipocrates Aforismas”. Later, with the collaboration of Prof. Vardeli Moraes and Gil Perini, organized the book “Na Seara de Ascéplio”, his last editorial work, launched in December 2013. Several of his writings on medical history can be accessed on the page <http://www.jmrezende.com.br>.

He also had expertise in medical associations, having founded the Goiana Society of Gastroenterology, and held various positions in the Brazilian Federation of Gastroenterology, being President in the years 1963-1964 and national lecturer of FBG. He was founder and President of the Academy Goiana of Medicine.

He worked with love and dedication the medical practice. In addition to the attendances that he gave at the Hospital das Clínicas, kept his Office as gastroenterologist until he was 89 years when for health reasons, was forced to leave his clinic. Over 25 years I have had the great privilege of acting as a doctor with him, with our offices door to door. Always found in him the most experienced and dedicated partner, ready to teach, to share his large experience. Along this conviviality, I could understand the extreme dedication, empathy and care dispensed to his patients.

As a good son from Minas Gerais, always devoted himself entirely to his family. He was married to Alzira Dourado, nurse, whom he met as a student in Rio. She was his great companion, being the great love that joined the couple Joffre and Alzira something striking, along a coexistence of 50 years, interrupted by her death in 2001. In this harmonious, warm atmosphere and cozy family, the couple created and took care of their children: Pedro, Angela, Joffre and Paulo.

Prof. Joffre Marcondes de Rezende passed away; today is no longer among us. The pain of his absence is softened by the certainty that he fulfilled very well his mission here on Earth, and now finds himself welcomed by God in eternity, blessing us. He now remains immortalized, not only in our hearts, but also, by becoming an integral part of what he devoted himself to studying: the History of Medicine.

I feel grateful and blessed of having had the privilege of being given a father like him: master and a unique example.

Prof. Dr. Joffre **REZENDE FILHO***