

Obituary

Died on December 15th, 2004 Dr. Diltor Vladimir Araújo Opromolla. His last days reflected what had been his entire life. During the year 2004 he was submitted to a risky surgery and posterior adjuvant treatment without abandoning, at any moment, his medical and scientific duties. He has not given up any of his responsibilities and last December, he was in Brasília, Federal District, participating of a meeting of the Health Ministry where he was honored for his work in leprosy, right after he went to the Amazon region (Acre State) to make arrangements to continue his project on Jorge Lobo's disease, he also went to the Institute of Health (São Paulo) and to Araraquara (SP) in order to participate of scientific meetings and where he presented several clinical cases on dermatology.

Dr. Opromolla had been compulsorily retired since April of 2004. This obligatory retirement at the age 70 should have meant the end of his activities as a medical doctor, began in 1958 at the "Lauro de Souza Lima" Institute. During these 46 years, Diltor was the pivot of the maintenance of the old Sanatory Aymorés as a Hospital directed to leprosy, and later as a Research Institute of the Secretary of Health of the State of São Paulo, a reference center for leprosy in Brazil and for the Portuguese speaking countries, an institution known and respected worldwide.

The starting point of his carrier was Dr Diltor's attitude as a doctor, more than anything else. He jointed

competence in diagnosing and treating patients with the deep and personal interest on them, thus establishing a frequently affective bond which was fully corresponded by his patients. This characteristic, plus his intelligence, working capability, thorough professional education and scientific curiosity (almost a pathological trait) led him unquestionably to teaching and research activities. He was not an isolated fighter; he attracted professionals from several different areas to work with him. This attraction of people was in reality a quest because it has never been economically stimulating to work with leprosy. He stimulated people through his own example, bringing up skills, and transmitted his encyclopedic knowledge on leprosy. Diltor had a solid basic knowledge on microbiology, pathology, immunology, epidemiology, clinical dermatology, neurology, therapeutics and rehabilitation. He worked and gave his opinion with accuracy in all those areas, he wrote scientific papers, sometimes discussing polemic points of view, but which were legitimated by his wide experience, observational ability and knowledge about the scientific literature.

The perplexity, sadness and deep feeling of loss caused his death were not restricted to the "Laura de Souza Lima" Institute and to Bauru, those feelings were diffused around Brazil and among all the friends he made around the world. What we said about Dr Opromolla's trajectory is the purest truth, but it does not give the dimension of how much he fought all the way throughout his life.

Raul Negrão Fleury