

Orestes Diniz

1902-1966

The leprology family has lost one of its most distinguished members with the death of Orestes Diniz on 16 February 1966 at Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Born in Varginha, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil, on 26 April 1902, Orestes Diniz finished his secondary studies at Belo Horizonte and then entered the Medical School of the University of Minas Gerais. He graduated in 1929, at the age of 27.

His career as a leprologist began in 1930 at the Inspectorate of Leprosy and Venereal Diseases, under the sponsorship of his teacher Prof. Antonio Aleixo. He was the first director of the leprosarium Santa Isabel Colony, which was inaugurated in December 1931, and lived there for seven years, working in the institution as a devoted scientist and dynamic administrator with a high humanitarian spirit. He became Chief of the Leprosy Service in 1939, and Director of the Department of Health of the State of Minas Gerais. He then returned to his former post. He became Director of the National Leprosy Service in 1956, and was General Director of the National Public Health Department in 1960 and 1961. Although then retired from public life, he was called back as Director of the Division of Hospital Organization of the Ministry of Health.

He was assistant in the Department of Dermatology and Professor of Leprology at the School of Medicine of the State of Minas Gerais, giving courses on leprosy in Minas Gerais and other states. During his professional career as a leprologist, professor, and health administrator, he worked

in the public health services of the State of Minas Gerais and the Federal Government.

Possessed, as he was, of great medical culture and experience with Hansen's disease, both in its scientific and social aspects, he always stimulated and helped various national and international institutions. He was a member of numerous professional associations, including the Council of the International Leprosy Association. His principal activity was in the field of leprology. In this he was known nationally and internationally.

He was Commander of the Military and Hospital Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, of the Order of Medical Merit of Brazil, and the Order of Inconfidência of Minas Gerais.

He published 150 scientific papers, many of them in collaboration with other investigators. In the literary field he wrote an interesting work entitled *Variações em torno do mesmo tema* (Variations around the same theme), published in 1959, and another of great success, in 1963 entitled *Nós também somos gente* (We too are people), which recorded his memories of thirty years among leprosy patients.

His was a spirit devoted to study, during all his long and profitable career. He had a magnanimous heart, turned always to his brothers suffering from Hansen's Disease.

His motto was: "Indulgent toward others; severe with himself."

—ERNANI AGRICOLA