

## OBITUARY

Francisco Eduardo Rabello

1905–1989



In the capacity of his successor, as Head of the Department of Dermatology in the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, and as Head of the service of the Hospital da Santa Casa de Misericórdia do Rio de Janeiro, I have the honor, although with much sadness, to point out this citizen's great qualities, as a man, a professor and doctor, as well as his influence on society and on medicine.

Rabello's main characteristic was precocity. In 1921, at only 15 years of age, he entered the University of Medicine Faculdade de Medicina da Praia Vermelha, graduating as a medical doctor before he was 21 years old.

Before choosing dermatology, still as a student, his first contact with a sick person was through a surgery in the service of Professor Augusto Brandão (1923–1924). Afterward, he proceeded through a medical clinic (1925–1926) under Professor Rocha Vaz's supervision.

His true identification with dermatosyphilology appeared when he achieved the first place in the course for venereologists of the Fundação Gaffrée-Guinle, a private welfare organization which had distinguished performance in the medical-social area in venereal diseases in Rio de Janeiro. It is appropriate now to emphasize the medico-social importance of venereology in those days. Syphilis was the main disease and its importance was so enormous that it was taught in all parts of the world as a sister discipline to dermatology. The expression dermatosyphilology was not only a subject of the medical curriculum, it was also used to qualify the medical societies and medical journals. Penicillin changed the whole pan-

orama: curing syphilis, its importance was reduced making the word syphilology disappear from the referred situations remaining only dermatology. After that course, Francisco Eduardo Rabello began his brilliant career as a dermatologist. In 1931, he was nominated Assistant of the Dermatologic Clinic, under the direction of Professor Arminio Fraga, an outstanding dermatologist and teacher. His first post of substitute professor was 7 years after graduating from the College of Medicine of the Universidade do Brasil. In 1939, he diagnosed the first Brazilian case of sarcoidosis, which was carefully studied as his thesis for his second post of substitute professor in the School of Medicine and Surgery.

In those days, sarcoidosis did not seem to exist in Brazil. After this first confirmation, outstanding phthisicologist colleagues Aloysio de Paula and Newton Bethlem, investigated the problem itself, researching and teaching in such a way that sarcoidosis became known to Brazilian doctors.

Rabello's dedication to study made him extend himself outside the university; he was a teacher in the university extension course about leprosy in the International Center of Leprology and professor in the courses of syphilology and leprology in the Ministry of Health.

Young, only 21 years of age, Rabello became a full professor of dermatosyphilology in a memorable and challenged course which took place in the Universidade do Brasil, following his father and teacher, Professor Eduardo Rabello. If in a certain way he achieved the maximum in his university career, on the other hand he began extraordinary work at Pavilhão São Miguel, free of prejudice and restriction, in the graduation of new specialists. History will confirm that Pavilhão São Miguel under the director of both Professor Eduardo Rabello and Francisco Eduardo Rabello led to the graduation of the greatest number of highly qualified

dermatologists in the country, many of whom now head several universities in Brazil.

His biggest scientific achievement was the polarity doctrine of leprosy (1938), now still recognized at the international congresses. Based on Rotberg's works and his own research, genius Rabello changed the leprosy panorama, which had repercussions in the clinic, in immunopathology, in epidemiology, and in the prophylaxis of the disease. Once and for all he extinguished the obsolete topographic classification of the disease into its cutaneous form and neuritic form, with no biologic expression. The lepromatous and tuberculoid poles were internationally accepted as an expression of wisdom.

His research work was intelligent and precise. While studying the prefoliaceous forms of our "Sauvage-Fire," he identified them with the Senece-Usher syndrome described in the U.S.A. He also described the late reaction of the Montenegro test and enlarged the knowledge about tegumentary leishmaniasis with his father's guidance.

A work of great merit was *Dermatological Terminology*, which had its beginning with the greatest dermatological group of those days, represented by Professors Hildebrando Portugal, Francisco Eduardo Rabello, João Ramos e Silva, and Joaquim Motta. Nevertheless, it was Rabello with a new publication, to make it better and larger, giving an exact concept to dermatosis and ordering them in a logical and rational basis. It is, in fact, a dictionary of scientific and practical context that should exist in all dermatologists' offices. This work gave credential to the position of chairman of the Dermatological Terminology Committee at the International Congresses of Dermatology at Stockholm (1957) and Washington (1962).

Together with Sylvio Fraga, he edited an interesting didactic dermatology book based on his personal experiences. He took part in several international congresses of dermatology and leprosy, and never missed the Brazilian Congress of Dermatology during his entire life.

His respect to the dermatological community was demonstrated while he was Editor-in-Chief of the *Anias Brasileiros de*

*Dermatologia e Sifilografia* (1924–1958). Among his scientific titles, we mention Councillor of the International Leprosy Association, expert of the International Leprosy Center (1936–1939), honorary member of the National Academy of Medicine, and of many other dermatological and leprosy societies, especially those of Germany, U.S.A., Spain, France, and Italy.

The National Academy of Medicine, when examining Rabello's scientific work, honored him with a valuable prize.

He worked as a doctor, without compensation, in the clinics of Pavilhão São Miguel and in the 11th Infirmary of the Santa Casa. He contributed with his knowledge to the poor who went to the Santa Casa searching for solutions for their health problems. He was always interested in trying to solve their problems with his assistants and not interested in private medicine. He did not care for money, so he lived in a modest but honored way.

Rabello was an uncommon man. To his attitudes he always gave a special touch of sensitivity. He was apparently shy but, in reality, courageous. He had good knowledge of music and literature, liking best Beethoven and Machado de Assis. He knew French and German well, which allowed him to read Bonaparte and Goethe in the original. He knew Napoleon's life very well and considered him a genius. He loved champagne. His favorite dish was roasted chicken, followed by the traditional guava paste sweet. Fulminense was his football team. Catholic, he respected all other religions.

In his home, his extraordinary wife Eunice always gave him the necessary support to project himself in public life. She, with her intelligence and good house administration, developed the necessary surroundings to her husband's development. All of us dermatologists who met her, admire her with respect, always young, happy and beautiful. She played the piano very well but gave up her career to dedicate herself to her husband.

In this moment of pain and reflection, all our respect and consideration go to Eunice. The couple had no children, but Rabello's pupils consider him as a father.

—Rubem David Azulay