

# OBITUARIES

## EMANUEL JESUS FARIA

### Editor, The STAR

### 1912–2004



Photo by Pamela Parlapiano

Emanuel Faria was born in British Guiana on Christmas Day, 1912. His mother, originally from Portugal, clearly hoped for great things for her son on whom she had bestowed such a powerful name—Emanuel Jesus. However, like so many others whose dreams have been cut short by a diagnosis of leprosy, Emanuel's life was to take turns that no one could have foreseen.

In 1927, at the age of 15, Emanuel was admitted to the Mahaica Leprosy Hospital outside of Georgetown, British Guiana, and spent the next five years of his life there. After being treated with a compound of chaulmoogra oil and creosote, he was discharged and returned home to work in his father's business. However, after a period of years, he returned to Mahaica due to increasing problems with his hands.

In 1968, Emanuel felt the need to leave what was then Guyana for political reasons and also hoped to have reconstructive surgery at Carville, where he arrived that same year. He already knew about The Star from correspondence with Stanley

Stein and in 1969 started to work as a proofreader. He would later say: "My philosophy of life is that we all have to contribute to the pool of good. . . We cannot expect others to contribute while we just go and draw from it and don't put anything into it. When I was given the opportunity to work at The Star, I felt I was contributing something."

At Carville, Emanuel had the opportunity to meet recognized authorities in the field of leprosy from different countries and developed the feeling that The Star, which had previously focused largely on social and human rights issues, needed to have a medical component. He undoubtedly also saw this as a way in which to increase the readership of The Star which, by 1990, was sent to more than 120 countries throughout the world.

Adding a medical component to The Star also enabled Emanuel to fulfill, in a small way, a part of his life that had been taken from him. He would later say: "If I didn't come down with this disease, I would be in England. I believe I would have studied medicine. I would have tried to win the Guyana Scholarship and either gone to Oxford or Cambridge."

Emanuel served on the Board of Directors of American Leprosy Missions for three terms, a total of nine years. He became the Editor of The Star in the mid-1990's and worked diligently to keep it alive through periods of major uncertainty, change and the ultimate decline in the population of Carville. Yet, despite uncertainties about his own future that weighed heavily on his mind in his final years, Emanuel always put The Star first. Indeed, this man of extreme intelligence who read ancient Greek history and poetry by Percy Bysshe Shelley in his spare time, knew that the voice of The Star and what it represents to so many individuals throughout the world, must continue.

News of his death on March 17, 2004, brought many tributes, including one from Miyoji Morimoto in Japan: "His consistent appeal for the actualization of a society without discrimination and prejudice against per-

sons who have been affected by Hansen's Disease and the restoration of their dignity, has reached out to the world. . . . His teaching will abide. . . . May his soul rest in peace."

—Anwei Skinsnes Law

## EMANUEL JESUS FARIA

Not unlike Father Damien and Stanley Stein, Emanuel Faria was a man with a mission in Life. Emanuel Jesus Faria began his life in Georgetown, Guyana, and learned at an early age that self determination was his best direction in life.

Emanuel came to the United States in hopes of seeking citizenship and a better opportunity for a better way of life. He arrived in 1969.

Mr. Faria was a self-educated man, with a great love of history. His most prized possession was the American Flag he received when he became an American Citizen. For all official photographs that were to appear in the press, he always requested that his American Flag be included in the photograph. Emanuel stated on one occasion that he always admired the United States and felt his arrival in the United States was the fulfillment of a life-long dream. He was a student and professional advocate of freedom and human rights.

So what better qualifications for a writer/editor of *The Star Magazine*, a publication dedicated to radiating the light and truth of Hansen's Disease worldwide.

Emanuel became a staff writer, and worked his way up the editorial line, to become Editor of the *Star* magazine in Carville, Louisiana, USA. He gave the old *Star* magazine a renewed future by bringing the publication into the digital age through online access worldwide.

Emanuel was intelligent, conscientious, and hard working, an individual who continued to educate himself throughout his life. He was a quiet man, who began his *Star* career as a staff writer and became Editor of the *International Magazine* in the 1990's. In 2001, he brought the *Star* magazine into the digital age. This meant learning to navigate the internet and computer during his 90th venue of life. He rose to the task at hand

with a sense of journalistic accomplishment not shared by many in the publishing world.

Simply because of his forward progressive thinking, anyone worldwide can now access the *Star* online, and the magazine can be published from any location, not just from behind the Gates of Carville.

He was a member of the American Leprosy Missions Board of Directors for many years and through his dedication and generosity to those less fortunate than himself, provided scholarly and monetarily of himself. He was dedicated to making this a better world for all. He was an activist in the fight for integration, dignity and economic advancement. (I.D.E.A.) His portrait was on display in the United Nation in New York, during the celebration, *Quest for Dignity* in 1997. He was an honest man with simple tastes.

Quoting from the IDEA newsletter a poem by Chen Shi Yun:

"Dying Wood Meets Spring"

The ill tree is dying,

Attacked by wind and rain

Yet lucky to meet spring and be  
nourished

The dying tree is dreaming of a new life.

Throughout history and into the present, individuals affected by specific diseases have been marginalized by society, denied their identities and their most basic human rights. Whole families have been stigmatized because of society's attitudes toward some diseases, that have generally been based on folklore, cultural traditions and outdated images rather than facts.

Yet, throughout history, there have also been, many powerful examples of individuals who have refused to be labeled by society. Men and women have risen their voices, sometimes in necessary protest, but

more often in poetry, music and art, to defy society's stereotypes, labels and limitations. Emanuel was one such internally liberated individual. A free soul liberated only in his mind and work.

Emanuel's life was a voice of humanity, not a meek voice, but a powerful strong voice for all people worldwide, that have suffered the stigma of man's inhumane fears and rejections. He was a crusader who dispelled ignorance, prejudices and superstition surrounding a disease. Emanuel "the man" quiet, intellectual, self-educated, dedicated and a sincere gentleman. Emanuel had courage and refused to quit until the battle with ignorance was won. He was working on the coming issue of *The Star*, when he became ill and went into the hospital, where he spend his last few days. His life was both an example and inspiration to others. He was a serious student of history and life, with a sincere work ethic. He was his own man and was spoken of often, as quite a character.

Emanuel played the role of Stanley Stein in the television documentary, "Exiles in our own Country." Over the years as writer for *The Star Magazine* he conducted interviews with foreign and national physicians and allied health professionals, as well as many correspondents and news media journalist. He wrote numerous articles on the progress of medical research. He spoke eloquently to medical groups or individuals, just interested in *The Star*. Medical writer, orator, actor, editor and United States citizen, describes briefly our friend. His leadership, perseverance, professional style, and smile, will be missed.

Emanuel was intelligent, conscientious, hard working and an individual who continued to educate himself throughout his life. In 2001, he brought *The Star Magazine* into the digital age. This meant learning to navigate the internet and computer with failing sight, but not insight. As an elder in our community, his life experiences should remind us all of our gifts, and how we might use these gifts to create, educate and contribute to our society in our own way.

Emanuel rose to the task when asked, not only to learn the computer, but to publish *The Star* online. Nearing his 90th birthday, he began to embrace the computer, internet and the digital age wholeheartedly. Emanuel was a true lover of history and knowledge and found a new world of exposure in his computer. I remember him saying, "can you really get the BBC!"

Father Damien, Mary Ruth, Stanley Stein, Dr. Paul Brand, and so many others, join Emanuel in helping us continue to make this a more humane world of hope, understanding and dignity for all people.

Thank you, Emanuel, from all the patients worldwide and many others, working around the world to eliminate the stigma of diseases, share accurate knowledge of progress, and promote educated truths. The world is a better place because you were an active player on the great stage of life. Your friends will greatly miss you and are grateful for the time shared together.

—Tanya Thomassie

*National Hansen's Disease Programs  
Media/Public Affairs*