

MAYALL, ISL AND BRAZILIAN LYMPHOLOGY: A TRIBUTE

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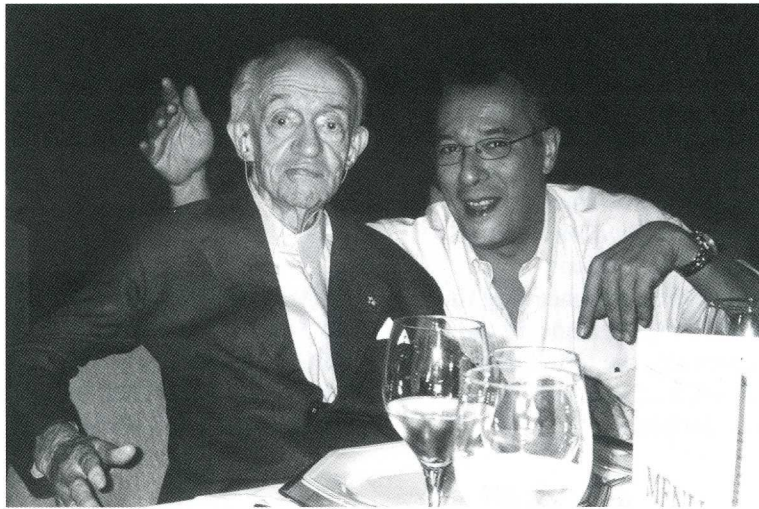


Fig. 1. The author (right) in a social moment with Rubens C. Mayall (left).

I first met Prof. Rubens Carlos Mayall more than a decade ago when he invited me, then a novice in the field, to help him in the organization of the XV International Congress of Lymphology. In spite of his well known fame throughout the country, I must admit I had serious doubts about his physical capacity and disposition to take such a huge task over.

It did not take long for me to notice that behind that frail structure was a strong and bright mind that could not only make a remarkable congress but also be the leader we need of the revolutionary growth Lymphology would experience in Brazil since then.

I selected three different moments in recent Mayall's life to exemplify the greatness of this pioneer:

India, 1999: He could finally see his "Hyperostomy syndrome" or "Mayall's syndrome" being recognized for the Society and was granted a Lifetime Achievement Award in Chennai. Everyone could notice the tears rolling from his eyes; this was a moment he awaited for years. There would be more: Just after the Executive Committee meeting that decided Brazil would host the 2005' ISL Congress, for the third time in the history of the society, Mayall was so happy that he could not afford not joining all the "lympho-maniacs" that left for a long journey to see wonderful monuments and landscapes in southern India. Despite his visible walking handicap, he came by in a taxi, followed the crowd and lost nothing to be seen. He was like that: he loved to be with his friends.



Fig. 2. Montage of Mayall memories with family, ISL colleagues, and his beloved Gamboa Hospital, with Rio's Sugarloaf Mountain in the background.

Moreover, he longed for the next meeting to see them all.

Genoa, 2001: In a congress organized by one of his beloved friends, Corradino Campisi, held in a country he loved dearly, his participation was one of a young lymphologist. He was so happy and enthusiastic about all the conferences and receptions that it seemed that he could hear everything that was being said. He was like that: he struggled for his ideas and tried to teach everyone what some 60 years of medical experiences have taught him. It was not always easy. On the contrary, he relied on his experience, on what he lived in his daily

practice of Medicine, much more than Science purists could accept. He was sometimes controversial but never capable to offend or be unkind to anyone who disagreed with his ideas.

Freiburg, 2003: Mayall could not attend the conference in Germany though he tried until the last moment to get his flight ticket. I confess I feared the worst: it would be the first ISL congress he would not participate in; since his first participation in 1970, he had not lost one.

Rubens Carlos Mayall was born in Petropolis, an imperial city outside Rio de Janeiro on July 7th, 1917, and in 1934 was

admitted to the National College of Medicine in Rio. Since the beginning of his medical activities, an outstanding feature of his personality would show up: his curiosity about several different areas of medical knowledge. Thus, he worked on Nephrology, Hematology, and Angiology. He was one of the founders of each of those Brazilian societies, a fact that granted him a great recognition throughout the country. He was also a pioneer in Vascular Radiology and his collection of phlebographies and conventional lymphographies was unmatched.

He was a master in the real sense of the word: uncountable students, both nationals and foreigners, were forged by his hands and mind through his classes and courses during his entire career, many organized in the University he helped to create: the College of Medicine of Valença outside Rio de Janeiro. He was so proud of the College he created and in which he taught for more than 30 years that some of his “lymph maniacs” friends were nominated “Doctor Honoris Causa” by that institution.

He was nominated to the Brazilian National Academy of Medicine, one of the highest awards a Brazilian physician can

achieve. Nevertheless, he was not selfish: he designated some ISL members to share with him such honor, as Foreigner Members of the Academy.

But his influence was not restricted to the Brazilian borders: together with his close friends Degni, Cordeiro, and Pereira he traveled all around the world to divulge Brazilian Lymphology and help to create many societies of Lymphology and Phlebology in Latin America. Not an unpleasant or difficult task for him due to his readiness of speech in several languages. Did he have other hobbies than going to the conferences and getting together with his friends? Not that anyone knows about. Vacations from work? Maybe he can get some now, after June 29th, in heaven (probably planning another congress of Lymphology with his old friends).

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