

## Historical Article

**Golden Jubilee of the Graduation Ceremony that didn't happen (1971 graduates)***Jubileu de Ouro da Cerimônia de Formatura que não aconteceu (formandos de 1971)***Ricardo Nitrini**

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**ABSTRACT:** The Golden Jubilee of FMUSP's 54th class (graduated in 1971) has the characteristic of rescuing the graduation ceremony that did not happen due to the political scenario of authoritarianism at the time. The homage to the great masters, not allowed to happen at the occasion, is the main focus of this manuscript, which also shows how we recognized their importance and were brave so as to not accept interference in our choices.

**Keywords:** Medical education; Mentors; Democracy; Graduation ceremony.

**RESUMO:** O Jubileu de Ouro da 54ª turma da FMUSP (formandos de 1971) tem a característica de resgatar a cerimônia de formatura que não ocorreu devido ao momento político de autoritarismo da época. A homenagem aos grandes mestres, que foi impedida na ocasião, é o principal destaque deste manuscrito, que revela também como soubemos reconhecê-los e como tivemos a coragem de não aceitar interferências em nossas escolhas.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação médica; Mentores; Democracia; Cerimônia de formatura.

**INTRODUCTION**

The 50th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony of the 54th. Class of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of São Paulo (FMUSP) took place on December 3, 2021, in the Theater of the institution itself, with the presence of representatives of the Board of Directors of FMUSP and the Association of Alumni of this Faculty, who attended and promoted the ceremony.

On this occasion, the speaker's speech brought relevant aspects of the history of the 54th. class that are part of the history of FMUSP and should be registered. The aspect that deserves more attention is that there was no graduation ceremony in 1971. The Board of Directors of FMUSP at the time did not agree with the honorees we had chosen and wanted to impose that we change the names of the professors chosen by us. It is important to remember that at the time we were living in the most

rigid and oppressive dictatorial regime in the country's republican history, particularly after Institutional Act No. 5, in 1968. Many of our classmates were arrested, others had to leave the country to continue their studies. A few of the honorees we chose were great professors who had left-wing political ideas while others were also great professors, but many of them did not have the title of full professor. Twenty-five years later, the new Board of FMUSP not only allowed but presided over our Silver Jubilee ceremony in recognition and in attempt to correct the error of past administration. Now, in this commemoration, we seek to remember and finally pay the tribute that we were prevented from paying in 1971. And in this way demonstrate the two most important characteristics of our class: the capacity for criticism when recognizing who our great professors were and the courage we had, to face the Faculty's direction by not accepting the exchange of our honorees. For these qualities, our group can be called *The Indomitable*.

At the commemorative ceremony of the 50th anniversary of the graduation of the 54th. Class from the Faculty of Medicine of the University of São Paulo (FMUSP) the speaker's speech highlighted relevant aspects of the history of FMUSP itself that deserve to be recorded. Therefore, the speech was transcribed in this article.

### THE SPEECH

Good morning, ladies, and gentlemen, and dear colleagues

It is a great pleasure to meet you again today in what has been our home for many years. On behalf of the entire 54th. class, entitled *The Indomitable*, I thank the presence of our distinguished guests: Professors Marcello Marcondes Machado and Gabriel Wolf Oselka. I also greet family and friends.

Many colleagues who are here today must be surprised to see me as the speaker of the class. Our great speaker has always been our colleague Reinaldo Morano Filho, but he couldn't graduate with us, because our college

days don't just bring back good memories. Those were the so-called leaden years, as you remember. Reinaldo and others were arrested by the dictatorship of the time and Reinaldo only graduated in this house years later. As informed to Itiro Suzuki, the speaker would need to have graduated with the class. Itiro, the organizer, the catalyst for uniting the class, was supposed to be the speaker, but he declined and indicated my name.

In this meeting we will remember many events that happened when we were all together in the same class and many other events over the following 50 years. Many of you had been doctors who took care of my children, my relatives and me. I was also privileged to have been the doctor chosen by some of you, revealing the mutual trust that exists between us.

All the classes that graduated from this or other schools or courses believe, to a greater or lesser extent, that they were unique, that they had very special characteristics. Therefore, I have the right to present some of them, which I think are peculiar to the 54th. class, to which others may be added by you in the next few days when we will be together.



Figure 1. The first photography of all students of the 54th Class.

Among the outstanding characteristics of our class, I would like to highlight two. The first was the critical spirit with which we evaluated the course, the teachers, the quality of what we were taught. We were not impressed by the titles or other qualifications of the masters. They were evaluated for their ability to pass on knowledge to us, not exactly for didactics, but for the genuine interest they had on research and on teaching their line of work and the way

they acted to make us learn what was necessary. I hope to make this characteristic of our class very evident when showing who were the honorees chosen for our graduation ceremony.

The second and perhaps the most important characteristic of our class: courage. Mainly to defend our opinions when Brazil was under the most rigid and oppressive dictatorial regime in its republican history,

particularly after Institutional Act N° 5 (AI-5), in 1968. Many of our colleagues were arrested, others had to leave the country to continue their studies.

But it is not enough to present or comment. We have to demonstrate that we really had these characteristics. And that the 54th class may, in fact, call itself “The Indomitable”.

Everyone knows or needs to know why these two teachers are here with us today and receive our honor. Our graduation ceremony and party, 50 years ago, were not held for undemocratic reasons and may allow us to demonstrate the distinctive characteristics of our class. The Faculty Board did not agree with the professors we had chosen as honorees.

***The Honored Spokesman:***

Nagib Curi (Chest Surgeon)

***Honored professors:***

- Alberto Carvalho da Silva (Physiologist)
- Isaias Raw (Biochemist)
- Leonidas de Melo Deane (Parasitologist)
- Cesar Timo-Iaria (Neurophysiologist)
- Waldomiro de Paula (Emergency Specialist)
- Gabriel Wolf Oselka (Pediatrician)

The Secretary and the Director of FMUSP tried to make us change the names that we had chosen, but we were irreducible. There were a few professors with leftist political views, but the majority of them was constituted by great masters that we recognized as very important in our formation, regardless of the titles they held. The retrospective that I will briefly present here shall demonstrate how well we chose our honorees, how we were able to recognize the great professors they were and still are.



**Figure 2.** Prof. Nagib Curi. Our honored spokesman.

Our honored spokesman, Prof. Nagib Curi, a great professor recognized and honored as one of the creators of the residency in thoracic and cardiac surgery at the *Hospital das Clínicas* (HC) of FMUSP, reported: “*I had been in the United States for eight years specializing in thoracic surgery, when Professor Zerbini asked me to return to the Brazil*”<sup>1</sup>. Professor Nagib Curi brought the first cardiopulmonary bypass equipment to our hospital. Prof. Nagib Curi was honored at the launch of the book “*80 years of History of the Discipline of Thoracic Surgery at FMUSP*”, having received the number 1 copy of the book. It is clear that the importance of Prof. Nagib Curi for this institution and particularly for the existence of INCOR (Institute of the Heart), is a fact that is still insufficiently recognized.

Prof. Alberto Carvalho da Silva, professor of Physiology at FMUSP, was impeached by the military dictatorship in 1969. He then began to act as a consultant for the World Bank in nutrition programs in Brazil (1974-79), Indonesia (1979) and Mexico (1982) and was a member of the UN’s Advisory Group of Nutrition. Reintegrated to USP in 1980, he was president of FAPESP (the most important public foundation with the mission to support research projects in higher education and research institutions, in all fields of knowledge, in Brazil) and presided over the Academy of Sciences of the State of São Paulo<sup>2</sup>.

Prof. Isaias Raw, professor of Biochemistry at FMUSP also impeached by AI5. Then, he was invited to be professor in Israel and at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in the United States. Back in Brazil, Isaias Raw helped to transform the Butantan Institute into the country’s largest center for producing serums and vaccines. He always considered it strategic to be self-sufficient in immunobiologicals and that only an installed production system would allow the appropriation of knowledge to be innovative in biotechnology<sup>3</sup>. Our recent history demonstrates how right he was. (Butantan Institute has been very important in the production of vaccines against COVID-19).

Leônidas de Mello Deane, a parasitologist trained at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of Pará, with a master’s degree at Johns Hopkins University and postgraduate studies at the University of Michigan, was invited by Professor Samuel Pessoa, in 1953, to join the Faculty of Medicine of University of São Paulo. In 1956, there was an epidemic of visceral leishmaniasis in Sobral, Ceará. Prof. Samuel Pessoa sent Leonidas Deane and his wife Maria José Von Paumgarten Deane, also a medical researcher and scientist like him, to try to understand and control the epidemic. There, Deane discovered the wild reservoir of *Leishmania* when performing necropsies on wild animals, verifying that the parasite infected wild and

then domestic canids and also discovered the transmitting insect, the sand fly *Lutzomyia longipalpis*. With insecticides (DDT) and the sacrifice of possibly contaminated dogs, the epidemic was controlled<sup>4</sup>. From the 1960s, Prof. Deane had an outstanding role at the National Academy of Sciences of the United States and the National Research Council, also from the United States, and at the Pan American Health Organization and at the World Health Organization<sup>5</sup>. In 1968, her only daughter, Luiza, was forced to leave Brazil like so many others whose ideas and political activities were not tolerated by the military that ruled the country since the 1964 coup. Voluntary exile, to accompany their daughter, took them to the University of Carabobo, in Venezuela and to the Instituto de Hygiene and Tropical Medicine of

Lisbon (1975). In 1980, he was invited to join FIOCRUZ (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation) as head of the Entomology Department at Instituto Oswaldo Cruz. Leônidas Deane and his wife were honored by FIOCRUZ with the creation, in 1994, of the Leônidas & Maria Deane Research Center, in Manaus (1994). They were also honored by Brazilian and foreign researchers who named their names for no less than eleven new species of insects and protozoa: *Phlebotomus deanei*; *Culex deanei*; *Triatoma deanei*; *Trypanosoma leonidasdeanei*; *Anopheles (Nyssorbynychus) deaneorum* among others<sup>6</sup>. He received important awards, but his research, especially on kala-azar, would certainly justify his nomination for the Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology.



Figure 3. The Honored Professors of the ceremony that did not occur.

César Timo-Iaríá, professor of neurophysiology, stood out in the field of brain electrophysiology, and he is considered one of the founders of Brazilian neuroscience<sup>7</sup>. The César Timo-Iaríá award is conferred by the Brazilian Society of Neuroscience and Behavior (SBNeC) to the most prominent Brazilian researchers in the area<sup>8</sup>. Prof. Timo-Iaríá made important discoveries in the field of sleep, where he introduced electrophysiological methods in sleep research in rats, in the relationship between motor and neurovegetative behavior and in the hypothalamus control over metabolism. A great professor, with a formidable scientific and humanistic culture, who had a great influence on his students during and after the Medicine graduate course.

Waldomiro de Paula, professor and great chief of the Emergency Room, the stage in which I and probably many of my colleagues learned how to be doctors, with the

constant presence of the “Fellow”, as he always called us all and as we also nicknamed him. He had full dedication to his Emergency Room and was rightly honored with the hospital of the city of São Paulo that bears his name.

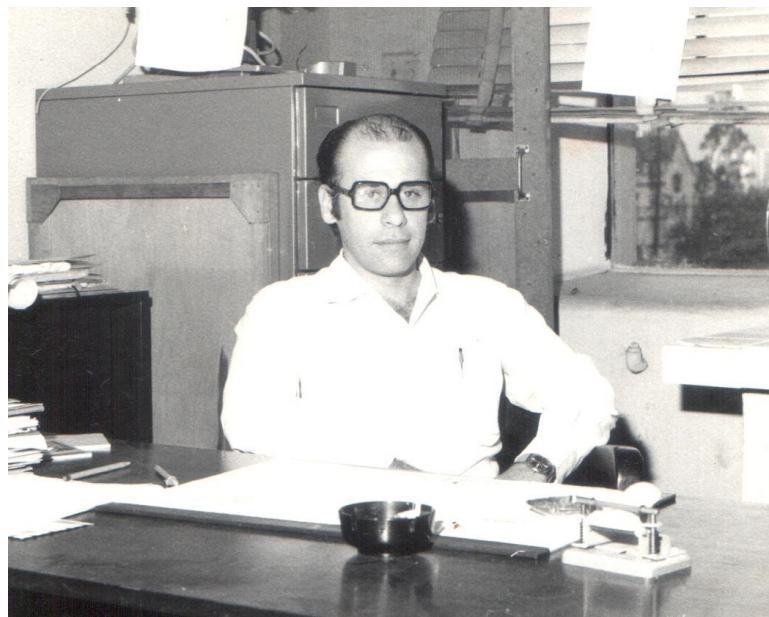
Gabriel Wolf Oselka, professor of Pediatrics, represents all of the honorees we intended to have at our graduation ceremony. Gabriel was one of the best professors and mentors we had in our course, which made many of our colleagues follow very brightly the specialty of Pediatrics. He also encouraged many of us to become teachers who used his teaching method at the bedside, with democratic and really pleasurable discussion of clinical cases. Prof. Gabriel is one of the professors most honored by graduates in the history of the FMUSP. He recently received the title of Professor Emeritus at FMUSP. He was president of the Regional Council of Medicine of the State of São Paulo and is Coordinator of the Bioethics Center of the Regional

Council of Medicine of the State of São Paulo<sup>9</sup>.

When reviewing a bit of the history of the honorees we have chosen, I am once again proud to see the critical spirit we had and our ability to identify great masters. In this ceremony we will also honor the professors who were very important throughout the course and also during our postgraduate training, especially in medical residency. The professors who were recently chosen by us and recognized as great masters are: Alberto Francisco de Souza Chauí (Cardiology), Alfredo Halpern (Endocrinology), Alvaro da Cunha Bastos (Gynecology), Angelita Habr Gama (Digestive System Surgery), Antonino dos Santos Rocha (Medical Clinic), Antonio Barros de Ulhôa Cintra (Medical Clinic), Antonio Carlos Massarotto Cesarino (Psychiatry), Antonio Frederico Branco Lefèvre (Neuropediatrics), Aroldo Minitti (Otorhinolaryngology), Berilo Langer (Vascular Surgery), Carlos da Silva Lacaz (Microbiology), Celeste Fava Neto (Microbiology), Charles Edward Corbett (Pharmacology), Dario Birolini (General and Trauma

Surgery), Euclides Fontegno Marques (Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery), Gerhard Malnic (Nephrology), Hans Wolfgang Halbe (Obstetrics and Gynecology), Isidio Calich (Rheumatology), Joaquim José Gama Rodrigues (Digestive System Surgery), José de Souza Meirelles Filho (Gastroenterology), Kiyoshi Iriya (Pathology), Lenir Mathias (Obstetrics and Gynecology), Luiz Alberto Bacheschi (Neurology), Luiz Venere Décourt (Cardiology), Mario Shiroma (Infectious Diseases), Paulo Corrêa Vaz de Arruda (Psychiatry), Samuel Kopersztych (Rheumatology), Sebastião de Almeida Prado Sampaio (Dermatology), Thales de Brito (Pathology), Therezinha Verrastro (Hematology), Waltenio Vasconcelos (Dermatology) and Yassuhiko Okay (Pediatrics).

Returning to our graduation ceremony that did not occur, the best description of what happened was given by our illustrious honoree, professor emeritus Marcello Marcondes Machado.



**Figure 4.** Prof. Marcello Marcondes Machado (Collection of the Museu Histórico da FMUSP).

Marcello Marcondes, a great professor of Nephrology at FMUSP unified Nephrology at *Hospital das Clínicas*, participated in the Commission that formed the LIMs (Medical Investigation Laboratories), including the Renal Physiology Laboratory of which he was the creator.

When our class completed 25 years of graduation, professor Marcello Marcondes was the Director of FMUSP. We asked him to allow us to host the graduation ceremony we had not had. Professor Marcello assured us that the FMUSP would provide full support. And that the Congregation would be duly communicated. And he said more: that it would be an honor for him, as Director, to

preside over the ceremony that would reduce the debt that FMUSP owed to the group formed in 1971.

Professor Marcello Marcondes described our graduation in the chapter entitled Academic Debt, with the subtitles A Celebration That Didn't Happen (1971) and A Celebration That Happened (1996), from his unpublished and awaited book, which our colleague Paulo Ulbricht revealed to us. In it he also wrote: "*I've been to several graduations, but none so emotional, with so many smiles, hugs, kisses, tears and laughter*". For his ability to recognize the mistake that FMUSP had made and, even more, for the courage to correct it, professor Marcello Marcondes is rightfully our honoree, 25 years later.



Figure 5. Our Silver Jubilee.

At another meeting, when we celebrated the 50th anniversary of joining FMUSP, the speaker of the class was our dear colleague Nair Clea Fonseca, who delivered an unforgettable presentation.

Nair is no longer here among us, as other colleagues of our 54<sup>th</sup> Class who passed away. I ask that now and during this meeting, we try to remind them, always thinking

about their greatest qualities and their best moments. They will always be part of our memory, where they are still alive, with us. Among these colleagues, I highlight our dear friend Leon William Rheims, Bill, who introduced rugby to this school, which was also a milestone that our class left at FMUSP. The FMUSP team was formed mainly by our colleagues from the 54th class.



Figure 6. The first Rugby Selection of FMUSP (At front, Bill with the oval ball).

But I was commenting on the unforgettable presentation Nair gave and whose motto was the relationship of our college days with music, with art. Because those were the years of MPB (Brazilian Popular Music) competitions, of the great popular composers like Jobim, Vinicius, Chico Buarque, Caetano, Gil, among others. And on the other side of the world, the Beatles, Ray Charles. And perhaps less known at the time, Charles Aznavour, from whom I now use this song that you all know in the English version, Yesterday, or in the original French, *Hier encore j'avais 20 ans* (Just yesterday I was 20 years old).

It was one of the best periods of our lives when we discovered so much, learned so much and remembered so much. At the Faculty, the conversations and activities at the academic center (CAOC), at Abel's bar with its walls full of critical and very amusing comments from each year's graduates, at the many assemblies, at *Show Medicina*, at *Atlética* (Center of Sports), with its Mac-Meds, Inter-Classes and others. Of scientific expeditions (to remote areas of Brazil) and the balls called Skeletons. We participate in everything.

In addition to Bill who created Rugby at the FMUSP, Leny Aparecida João together with her classmates formed the first women's basketball team at this College, with Aziz Cury Filho as coach.

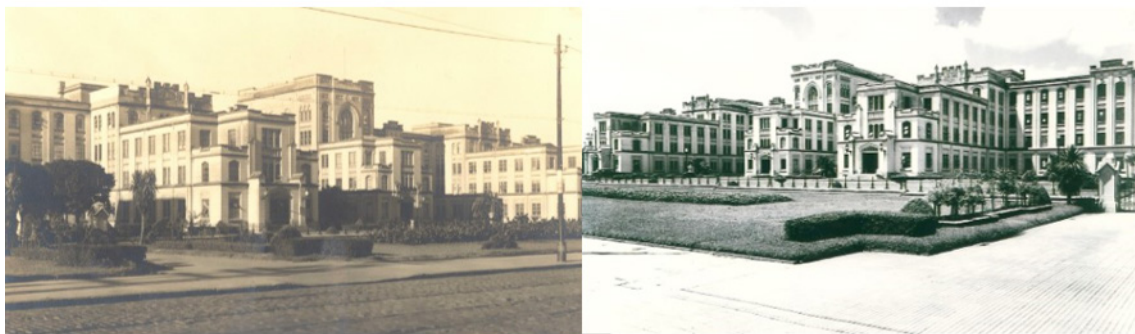
Many photos of meetings, scientific expeditions, medicine shows, and the athletes of the class in other sports were recently released mainly by our colleagues Luís Carlos Arcon and Itiro Suzuki on our website, bringing great memories for many of us.

Getting into this College was, as it still is, extremely difficult. Passing the entrance exam was for many of us the most important achievement we had, which certainly

increased our self-esteem a lot and for this reason we celebrated the 50th anniversary of joining FMUSP, which I have already mentioned.

I think everyone remembers the simulation or trick that was prepared for us. We were in the first class, in the amphitheater (I believe in Anatomy), when the class was interrupted because there was an important communication to be made. A few professors wearing white coats entered the room bringing the sad news that errors had occurred in the classification of the entrance exams and that many of those approved for admission to the College should not be there. The list was to be posted soon and some of those present were to leave the building. Then, senior students representing the Academic Center came in saying that they were on our side, that if there was a mistake, it wasn't ours and we, the freshman students, wouldn't have to pay for it. And that we too should speak out and resist because they were with us. Immediately, some of our colleagues spoke out against the idea of expelling us (I think many, if not all, imagined that they could be on the list of those who had not been approved) and an atmosphere of extremely heated discussions ensued, with some of the teachers calling attention for us to respect the authorities by obeying the orders and determinations of the commission that had organized the examination for entrance. Our revolt grew, along with fear, the real fear of losing that important achievement.

After a time that I still remember being very long, the teachers in white coats burst out laughing and revealed that it was all a joke, that it was a trick, and invited us to go to the basement, to the academic center (CAOC), to the Abel's bar, where a reception was prepared for the freshmen, with sandwiches, beer and soft drinks. It was a magnificent trick, which, I believe, no one forgets.



Collection of the Museu Histórico da FMUSP

**Figure 7.** Two photos of the FMUSP, approximately 50 years ago.

Going back to the time when we were 20 years old. Our city was different, there was much more security, the tram passed in front of the FMUSP, which had an even bigger lawn. We have many good memories that make us idealize the past. But we must try to do a fair look back on our 20s and the 50s that came after.

First, we have to recognize that, to a greater or lesser degree, we are what this house has allowed us to be. To me, she gave almost everything. And if we enter here on our merits as dedicated students, it is far from the only reason. We studied at this university because our country's public policies allowed it. In our time, it was possible to study in

public schools and enter the best colleges in the country, without having scholarships or paying for it.

Think about it, few countries in the world had or still have this policy that allows social mobility, the social ascension of the population to become part of its elite. But progressively, elementary schools went into decline, reducing the possibility that individuals from less favored socioeconomic strata could take advantage of this opening that our policy allowed. But recently, affirmative actions were adopted that, with the quota policy, allowed not only the admission of good students from public schools, but also those who, for socioeconomic and racial reasons, had not had the opportunity to access our best universities until then.

Regarding our time, which we rightly remember with nostalgia, it must be verified that we have advanced a lot with the criminalization of racism, respect for sexual orientation, rejection of bullying, among others. The appreciation of democracy has become a heritage even more intrinsically linked to our culture, but which we always must defend.

It is curious that, alongside bad public policies, we have some that are so good in the field of higher education, in health with the Unique Health System (SUS), vaccination and the fight against AIDS (which are universally admired),

and in the rights to diversities of race, creed and sexual orientation, for example, when our political class is almost unanimously considered very bad. This is a paradox which as such defies logic. But as for every complex question there is always a simple, elegant, and usually wrong answer, I dare to insert my own hypothesis. According to what I think, most of our policymakers are bad politicians and many spend years without ever proposing even a project. But a few good politicians propose excellent projects and, in the void of ideas that others open, they get them voted on and approved, which takes our country forward.

Finally, we owe a lot to the public university represented by this institution, to the public policies that opened this possibility for many of us, and finally to the democracy that allowed these ideas and projects to make this country a little better.

In this happy moment of meeting with friends, we cannot fail to be grateful to society and to reciprocate by always fighting for the maintenance of democratic rules at all levels, with a free press and respect for the Constitution.

Again, greetings and thanks to our honorees, congratulations to all colleagues. And thank you for the honor of being a Golden Jubilee speaker at the 54th class, the Indomitable.

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