

Professor Othon Bastos (1936–2016): A man whose name is synonymous with erudition and generosity

Professor Othon Bastos (1936–2016): Um homem cujo nome é sinônimo de erudição e generosidade

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On August 7, at 4 a.m. in the morning, in Recife, Dr. Othon Coelho Bastos Filho passed away to his eternal rest. He was a beloved only son, born in Apipucos (Recife) in June 1936, in a medical facility that, in 1959, became part of the former University of Recife, currently the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE). He was an outstanding student winning many awards, somewhat eccentric but friendly, an intellectual, a polyglot, a lover of the arts, culture, of people and of our native language. He had an unforgettable laugh and, having heard him speak several times, I have marvelled at his noble words, phrases, high scholarship and dialectics. On countless occasions, I silently turned to a dictionary to clarify meanings of words spoken by him. He was also a man before his time, a bulwark of Brazilian Psychiatry, a retired professor at the UFPE, as well as a former president, *pro tempore*, of the University of Pernambuco State (UPE). Moreover, he was an emeritus professor of both institutions. The Figure shows Professor Dr. Othon Bastos receiving, with honors and merits, the degree of emeritus professor at UFPE in February 2012, in recognition of his contributions during his more than 43 years of working at the institution. The ceremony was presided over by the president of UFPE, and included in the audience the many colleagues, friends and family of Dr. Othon, as he was known. Dr. Othon devoted a lifetime to the education of several generations of psychiatrists, scientists and other professionals, culminating in a compelling legacy of willpower, knowledge and kindness.

It is worth noting that Dr. Othon was trained by Nelson Chaves (1906–1982), who was awarded a scientific initiation grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. Dr. Othon also worked with Naíde Teodósio (1915–2005), for whom he had much admiration. Dr. Othon was a founding member of the Brazilian Association of Psychiatry and the Pernambuco



(Original photo from the personal archive of Professor Carlos Vasconcelos).

Psychiatry Society and, in his lifetime, gained numerous other honors and achievements, too many to be included here.

The *Journal of Neurobiology*, currently being updated, has been in existence for 78 years. It was established in 1938, with the ISSN of the printed version appearing in the year of its creation. The journal was one of Dr. Othon's passions, which was well known by me and recently confirmed by his sons, an engineer and an eminent physician. The *Journal of Neurobiology*

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was the only one of this nature at the time of its foundation and was therefore a pioneer in the field of neuroscience and behavioral sciences in Latin America. It went through several historical changes in Brazil, both good and bad, but always survived and was held in high esteem by those involved in the health professions, including some who dedicated their lives in nobly striving to ensure the journal's survival. In 1999, Dr. Othon once more invigorated the journal by becoming its editor-in-chief. In 2006, my having newly arrived from São Paulo, it was announced at a meeting of members that I was to be his assistant editor.

For me, saint baroque, as he called me, during the past 10 years as the assistant editor, it has been a unique and fantastic experience in every shape and form, giving rise to a whole range of emotions. It was a privilege to be part of it all and to contribute seriously and with love to the continuing success and development of the journal. However, this could only happen with the immense assistance of everyone

associated with the journal; far too many to be mentioned here. Other prominent individuals contributed to the journal's success by including their articles, notes and collaboration. In the very near future we expect success through another innovation, i.e. the journal being scanned from its first volume and thus becoming widely available for reference. Currently, one of the only complete collections of the journal is located in the library of UFPE. We thank the UFPE Publishing Department's unconditional assistance in typesetting the final editions of the last volumes, supported by UFPE.

I am very grateful for having lived and learned so much through my involvement with the journal, in particular from its boss who, just one day before his death, was reading Greek mythology. His life shows us that everything is beautiful, that there are new beginnings, new purposes, faith and work with little chance of failure. All our gratitude and respect goes to the eternal master.