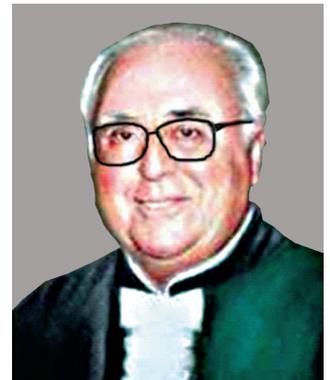


## Washington Luis Tafuri (★ 1926 †2013)

The Latin American Scientific community involved in tropical medicine and general pathology recently lost one of its most revered and internationally recognized members. Internationally renowned for his enormous contribution to the study of Chagas disease, leishmaniasis, histopathology, Immunopathology, and related subjects, *Professor Washington Luis Tafuri* was a physician and had graduated from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, in 1951. During his medical career, he had become interested in histology and pathology, coincidentally at a time when tropical diseases and tropical pathology were gaining importance in Brazil because malaria had spread all across the country, and Chagas disease was endemic with a high mortality rate. At this time, leishmaniasis and Manson schistosomiasis had spread from the northeast to the southern regions, predominant focal points of plague, lymphatic filariasis and trachoma. This was also the time when the Brazilian Ministry of Health and the Brazilian Council of Research (CNPq) were being merged. In addition, across universities in Brazil, graduates, post-graduates, and research fellows were engaging in serious debate and discussions on how to deal with and resolve problems of national relevance. It is against this backdrop, that a determined, intelligent, hardworking, and young Tafuri quickly caught the attention of renowned Professor Luigi Bogliolo, who accepted him as a student in the *Bogliolo's School of Pathology*. This school also boasted of eminent alumni of pathologists, such as E Chapadeiro, P Raso, ER Lopes, FL Pereira, G Brasileiro, HS Brandão, R Alvarenga, JE Pitella, M Cagliari, and others, with an excellent academic record over the last 60 years. Tafuri received his title of Doctor of Medicine in Belo Horizonte (UFMG), in 1955, and completed his post doctorate in Pathology from the Max Plank Institute, in Germany, in 1959.



Tafuri spent his entire life in universities, acquiring the highest academic degrees (Full Professor and Emeritus Professor) from the Federal Universities of Minas Gerais and Ouro Preto and Vitória, also teaching in the Medicine School of Barbacena. Tafuri was the first fellow of CNPq, and ended his career as Senior Researcher of the Council. A very interesting and rewarding incident took place in Tafuri's rich academic career during the final of his Full Professor Academic Concourse at the Federal University of Minas Gerais. After more than 12 hours of exhausting work, the examining committee (comprising Professor Bogliolo and four other eminent pathologists) began declaring – one by one – the scores they had awarded for each of the five items considered (curriculum, practical work, memorial defense, technical dissertation, and oral proof). Tafuri's faculty colleague, Professor Pedro Raso, was delegated to tabulate the scores on a large blackboard, placed center stage at the imposing Medicine School auditorium. The room was filled to capacity with students, colleagues, teachers, friends, and family members. The first entry, “ten” (the maximum score), received enthusiastic applause, followed by the second, the third, and so on. When the 25<sup>th</sup> “ten” was announced, everyone in the auditorium, including the committee members, and the technical staff, were ecstatic, several amongst them overwhelmed with emotion and joy. Only Professor Tafuri, modest and simple as always, remained silent, wearing his usual gentle smile, patiently gathering his things.

Tafuri was and has always been our friend and guide – competent, modest, caring, and faithful to his principles. Tafuri was always working and trying to help someone, mainly his students. He was an excellent and patient professor, who had taught thousands of students in his career of more than 50 years. He also headed different postgraduation courses and guided several masters and doctors at his various laboratories, sending out dozens of well-prepared pathologists to several parts of Brazil and overseas. As a prolific researcher, Tafuri mainly focused on Chagas disease and visceral leishmaniasis, studying important aspects of their pathology, and immunopathology. His thesis on the pathogenesis of chagasic cardiopathy is considered one of the best studies on the subject, especially on the topic of fibro-genesis. Tafuri published 122 scientific papers and wrote a 15-chapter book, and presented his works in 142 medical congresses. Until his final days, he continued working on experimental models of Chagas disease (mice and dogs) and visceral leishmaniasis (dogs).

Born in Desterro do Melo 86 years ago, a quiet place of the State of Minas Gerais, Washington Luis Tafuri reached the highest pinnacle of academics in a career spanning over 50 years. His many awards and academic distinctions notwithstanding, he was very happy and honored to be admitted to the Minas Gerais Academy of Medicine, and to receive the title of Emeritus Academic some years ago. Tafuri was a gentle, kind, and considerate person, devoted to his family, his work, his students, and friends. He never lost his extreme simplicity or his passion to do things well or his desire to serve his people. Until the very end, he was a happy man, visiting his birthplace and enjoying fishing with his friends in the small lake of his family croft, the place where he breathed his last. The end came without pain, there were no complaints, and he fell asleep at some point and left us, serene as always.

Professor Washington Luis Tafuri is survived by his wife Maria da Conceição (who he lovingly called “Mother”), four sons (Antônio Carlos, Wagner, Marília, M. Isabel) and many grandchildren.

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