

XORGE ALEJANDRO DOMINGUEZ, MEXICO'S FOREMOST ORGANIC CHEMIST

Xorge Alejandro Dominguez, Mexico's Foremost Organic Chemist was born in Orizaba, State of Veracruz, Mexico on November 12, 1926 and died of heart attack in Mexico City on May 26, 1991, only hours after he had been awarded by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari the *Lázaro Cárdenas Medal* for his contributions and dedication to the scientific advancement of Mexico.

He attended primary and secondary schools in his native city (Escuela Primaria Cantonal and Escuela Secundaria Federal Obrera de Orizaba). He continued his studies in Mexico City and obtained the Bachelor Degree in Biological Chemistry from the Instituto Politécnico Nacional in 1950. In 1952 he obtained a Master of Science Degree from Harvard University and in 1964 he was awarded a Ph.D. Degree in Chemistry from the University of Texas. In 1970, Professor X.A. Dominguez received an Honorary Doctoral Degree from the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara.

His first faculty appointment (1946-47) was in the National School of Biological Sciences of the National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico in Mexico City. From 1948 until his death he was Professor of Chemistry at the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey - ITESM, in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico. From 1957 to 1991 he acted as Chairman of the Chemistry Department of ITESM. Prof. Dr. X.A. Dominguez taught as Visiting Professor at many universities in different countries, including Mexico, United States, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia and Argentina.

Professor X.A. Dominguez had research interests that dealt mainly with the chemistry of natural products. He discovered, isolated and identified many new chemical substances from Mexican plants and organized many international symposia and conferences dealing with phytochemistry. He has published over 250 articles and several books dealing with this subject. During the 44 year period as professor and researcher at the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, ITESM, he acted as research advisor of more than 200 students at the graduate and undergraduate levels. More than 100 graduate students completed their master's theses or doctoral dissertations under his supervision.

We first met Prof. Dr. Xorge A. Dominguez in December of 1975 during the First Chemical Congress of the North American Continent in Mexico City. At the time, he was already one of the most respected chemists in Mexico. Wherever he went, he was the center of attention, appreciation and esteem.

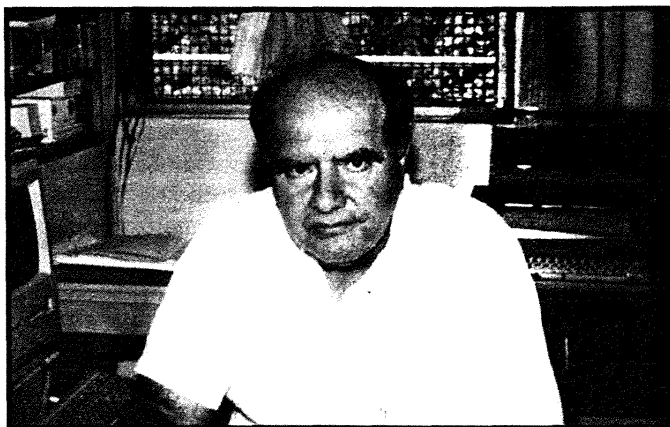
Professor Xorge A. Dominguez was a very educated and erudite man, a scientist aware of his social responsibility and a patriot. He firmly believed that the main purpose of the true scientist was the search for truth and its application to the improvement of the conditions of man. He was also a great educator. Like all good teachers, he believed in the power of example and thought that a teacher can teach the most by his own example.

According to many of his students and collaborators who used to call him "Doctor", Prof. X. A. Dominguez was not only a professor, educator, chairman, co-worker, researcher, but also a guide, source of inspiration and example, father, friend and a lot more. Many recollect their peripatetic walks with him on the various floors of the Chemistry Building, then to the Post Office, Administration Building Library of ITESM, etc. and back to his office. During these journeys or peregrinations with him they learned about a lot of things while accompanying the teacher. The knowledge gained could be philosophy, chemistry, politics, a new chapter of the history of Mexico, world history or about the poverty oath of the true scientist. Sometimes he would tell a lot of jokes. His office was a true "Temple of Entropy". Mountains of books, journals, articles, papers and all kinds of other "things" (cosas). There, almost in a strike of magic, he always found what he was looking for.

Professor Xorge A. Dominguez was preoccupied with the teaching of science at all levels. He was the author of more than 35 chemistry books aimed for university and secondary school instruction. Among them we cite *Fundamentos y Problemas de Química Orgánica*, Limusa-Wiley, 1970; *Fitoquímica*, Limusa-Wiley, 1975; *Química Orgánica Fundamental*, Limusa, 1980; *Química Orgánica Experimental*, Limusa, 1982 and *Cromatografía en Papel y en Capa Delgada*, OEA, Washington, D.C., 1975. He also translated about a dozen books dealing with chemistry or other areas of science, mainly from English.

Professor X. A. Dominguez was widely respected in the scientific community. He was a member of the Mexican Chemical Society, American Chemical Society, Swiss Chemical Society, Phytochemical Society of America, National Academy of Scientific Research of Mexico and a fellow of the Royal Chemical Society. He was President of the Northeast Section of the Mexican Chemical Society from 1976 to 1978 and gave many invited lectures throughout Europe and the Americas.

He received many awards for excellence in teaching or research in chemistry. Among them we cite the Romulo Garza Prize for Research in 1974 and for Teaching in 1975, National Scientific Prize Luis Elizondo in 1976, National Education



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AZTEC CALENDAR. SYMBOL OF PERIODIC ONDULATORY
BEHAVIOR OF THE UNIVERSE AND TOKEN OF THE
ETERNITY OF KNOWLEDGE.

Award in 1982, Andrés del Rio National Award in Chemistry in 1984, National Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences Award in 1986 and the Lázaro Cárdenas Medal in 1991.

He was Regional Editor (1970-1972) and Editor in Chief of the *Revista Latinoamericana de Química* from 1972 to 1991 and member of the Editorial Board of other journals and periodicals including the *Revista de la Sociedad Química de México* and *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación Química*.

Prof. Xorge A. Domínguez was also a Member of the Editorial Board of the *Southern Brazilian Journal of Chemistry* and he gave us very valuable advice during the initial stages of this Journal. He was always ready to help, collaborate and fulfill his responsibilities. ¡Adiós muy distinto compañero y amigo !

Lavinel G. Ionescu

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