

Memorial

The parting of Jorge Kavakama, a shining star in Brazilian medicine that has flickered out

MÁRIO TERRA FILHO

On the first of December, tragic news arrived from Chicago: Dr. Jorge Kavakama had passed away. It is a very difficult task to write about a friend who left us. However, because this person was Professor Dr. Jorge Kavakama, our Jorge or Jorginho, this mission is less painful since we will reminisce about someone who was pure joy, a wonderful friend who always made himself available to us. Jorge, according to our mutual friend Chico Hora, was a synonym for a smile, a fraternal embrace, a handshake and easy conversation. Jorge resembled the best day of the week: he was Friday incarnate. He loved music, color and form. He was a sensitive person. He enjoyed meeting with large groups of friends in bars and restaurants. On such occasions, everybody around him would participate in the festivities, from the cleaning staff to the people responsible for making coffee, as well as the administrative personnel, biomedical professionals, nurses, residents, interns, fellow physicians and all types of friends. Jorginho had a special relationship with his family; he loved his children and would always try to offer them more. Untitled, he was a free professor. He would teach anywhere, even beyond the bonds of academia. He was a teacher without students; he had disciples who, since his first teachings on the basics of tomography scans of the chest, became his loyal followers for life, multiplying the knowledge he had granted them to everybody. His lectures and classes were always the best attended. He would teach with his intellect, his body language, his humor and his intonation; he would sometimes act like a samurai, sometimes like a strict professor. His lectures were incomparable. He was not an office radiologist; he hated downloading stacks of scans. As a matter of fact, he was a clinical radiologist, enthusiastic about diagnostic challenges and was always meeting with clinical physicians and surgeons. He was an integrator: he was the one most responsible for creating the liaison between pulmonology and thoracic radiology. He was a constant presence in the pulmonology milieu. He was the image editor for our Brazilian Journal of Pulmonology. He was the most sought-after chest radiologist to participate in national and regional congresses, seminars and meetings, and he would devote equal attention to all. His contributions as a



researcher were not as well known. He introduced high-resolution tomography of the chest to Brazil in the 1990s. He read, classified, interpreted and discussed 500 tomography scans. However, he would not write even five lines but would leave that task to others who had had the privilege of working with him. However, in 2004 and 2005, he was a co-author of studies published in Radiology and in the Journal of Computed Assisted Tomography. To us, Brazilian pulmonologists, he was an idol, the greatest of all and beyond compare. He had wished to be the Coordinator of the Imaging Department of the Brazilian Society of Pulmonology and Phthisiology. However, despite all his qualifications, this did not become a reality. It was undoubtedly a great loss for all Brazilian pulmonologists. He left us much too soon, creating a void. I know that, wherever he is now, if there is a light box and a tomography scan nearby, he will surely be teaching, even if his disciples are angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim. You left us, but, for us, Jorge will live forever.

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