

## MARCEL ROCHE, THE FOUNDING EDITOR OF *INTERCIENCIA*

Forty six years ago, in 1974, the Interciencia Association was established in Recife, and registered as such in Caracas, in 1975. Among the first decisions of its members was the creation of *Interciencia*, a journal oriented to stimulate “scientific research, its humanitarian use, and the study of its social context, specially in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to promote communication between the scientific and technological communities of the Americas”. It was to be published in Spanish, English and Portuguese.

The responsibility of organizing it and get it started was given to Marcel Roche Dugand (Caracas 1920 - Miami 2003), a Venezuelan scientist of extensive career both in the scientific sphere as well as in science policy in the region. He remained its editor from 1976 to 1999.

Roche graduated as physician at the Johns Hopkins University Medical School in 1946, and pursued his residence and specialization in North American institutions. He returned to Venezuela at the beginning of the decade of 1950, worked in the medical practice for a short time and thereafter dedicated himself to biomedical research, studying rural anemias and endemic goiter. His activity in the field of scientific and technological policy covered from the organization of the *Instituto de Investigaciones Médicas* of the Luis Roche Foundation (1952-58), holding the office of General Secretary of the *Asociación Venezolana para el Avance de la Ciencia* (AsoVAC; 1958), the organization and direction of the *Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas* (IVIC; 1959-69), the direction as first President of the *Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas* (CONICIT; 1969-72), and the foundation of the Center for the Studies of Science at IVIC (1976) to harbor the Social Studies of Science (SSS). He represented the country and served as advisor in several regional and international institutions related to science, such as the United Nations University, UNESCO, WHO and PAHO. He became a member of the Pugwash Movement and was part of its Board of Directors (1976-1986).

In the midst of this vast scientific research, management and policy activity, Roche employed the written word

to communicate science in its most varied dimensions: to present results of biomedical research and of SSS, to set the pace of values and behaviors of new institutions such as IVIC and CONICIT, and to disseminate science, having been recognized for the latter with the UNESCO’s Kalinga Prize in 1987.

Roche the founding editor of *Interciencia* has left his fingerprint as a man of two cultures. The cover of the journal, where a work of art by an artist of the Americas is reproduced in each issue, has become one of its distinctive features; and it merges with the contents of research papers showing how science and art can be in brotherhood.

For years the publishing office of *Interciencia* was in Caracas, allowing me to be witness of the initial years of the journal, the eagerness to attract good scientific material, the refereeing process and placing the journal in a good ranking, which not only was achieved by a punctual release of the journal, but by papers being of quality and having visibility. In fact, the journal became a learning school for the associate editors. Well before his retirement in 1999, *Interciencia* was recognized.

Funding the journal was a problem that always bothered Roche; in its initial years Venezuela, by way of CONICIT, provided together with the equivalent institution from Mexico a substantial part of the required amounts, which were completed with those obtained through subscriptions; later, other Latin American, North American and Canadian institutions contributed. Nowadays, *Interciencia* faces the reality of obtaining reliable and stable funding, or perishing. We do hope that in this year, the centenary of the birth of Marcel Roche, its founding editor, a way could be found for *Interciencia* to continue being a publication alternative for the community of researchers of Latin America and the Caribbean.

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