

## MAHABIR GUPTA (1942-2020)

The Interciencia Association has lost who has been its most important pillar during the last decades. After overcoming Covid-19, Mahabir Prashar Gupta succumbed to a pulmonary complication, at the age of 78, on December 14.

Since 1972, after completing his training in pharmaceutical chemistry, Gupta established himself in Panama and made of it his homeland. As a Professor in the Faculty of Pharmacy of the Universidad de Panamá he carried out, for 48 years, an exemplary academic work, both in his teaching and organizer role and in his role as a researcher. The result of this is the many disciples he had and the enormous number of scientific papers that form part of his service record, even more noteworthy because these are services rendered in a country with a limited tradition and meager resources for research. He is recognized as Founding Director and promoter of the Center for Pharmacognostic Research of the Flora of Panama (CIFLORPAN).

Gupta demonstrated how, with clear objectives and perseverance and, without need to have access to the benefits of belonging to political groups, it is possible to reach goals that often appear to be further away from that which is possible.

The Panamanian science has lost who, without any doubt, will be counted as one among the most outstanding researchers.

But the work of Mahabir Gupta was not circumscribed to his adoptive homeland. During decades he played a central role in multinational undertakings such as the phytopharmaceuticals project of the IberoAmerican Science and

Technology for Development (CYTED). His many connections led to his incorporation to the Academy of Sciences of Latin America (ACAL), to the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), to the Royal Academy of Pharmacy in Spain and to the IberoAmerican Academy of Pharmacy.

Among the many honors and prizes he received in recognition of his extensive endeavors stand out the Prize for Excellence in Science from Panama, the Prize for International Cooperation of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the Interciencia Award for Health.

As Executive Director of the Interciencia Association for over 20 years Gupta, with his jovial character, his proactive attitude and his refined taste, was the factor for understanding and congeniality that united the Association's members, leaving a profound footprint worth of being imitated. He was the motor that organized and executed the diverse activities carried out by the Association, whether the annual meetings of the Council, the many symposia, the awarding of prizes and stimuli, or the support of the *Interciencia* journal.

Those of us who are the personnel in charge of producing the journal, who so much enjoyed the friendship, comradeship, wisdom and support from Mahabir, together with the members of the Council of the Interciencia Association and its Executive Committee, declare their most heartfelt expression of sorrow to his wife and children, as well as to his colleagues at the University of Panama and to the whole scientific community of Panama and Latin America. His memory shall inspire many. May he rest in peace.