

LEGACY OF TWO GIANTS

In 1976, and under the direction of Marcel Roche, the journal *Interciencia*, entered the scene of international scientific communication as the flagship project of the Interciencia Association, a forum for the National Associations for the Advancement of Science of the Americas. At that time and for some years before –from the north of Canada and the United States to the south of Argentina and Chile– national leaders in science and technology were looking for mechanisms to close the gap that existed with the producers of new knowledge. Marcel Roche's career as a researcher and science manager was well known throughout the continent. Therefore, his leadership guaranteed the choice of spokesperson for his colleagues.

It is worth remembering his time as editor of *Interciencia*, his tribune and instrument to promote and publicize scientific activity in the region. For 22 years, Marcel Roche guided, configured, and made a reality the journal, an appropriate medium to communicate the achievements of Latin American researchers, a novelty then not only for its scientific contents but in journal's design: the journal cover was used as a vehicle for exposing avant-garde work by some of the new regional artists. The work of Marcel Roche as a science communicator was recognized worldwide when, in 1987, UNESCO awarded him the Kalinga Prize.

In 1999, Miguel Laufer succeeded Roche at the helm of *Interciencia*, Laufer, a Venezuelan, medical doctor and neuroscientist at Marcel Roche's IVIC, had also distinguished himself as an international diplomat from the OAS Secretariat of Science and Technology, an internship that allowed him to learn –first-hand– the science and scientists of the region. Given this intellectual baggage, the choice of Laufer as Roche's successor was natural. ¡Time has proven how wise that decision was!

Although Laufer inherited a well-defined editorial project that was progressing at a very good pace, his sound

management decisions over the last 23 years cannot be attributed to an inertial legacy. Indeed, while difficulties that Roche faced in his role as founding editor of *Interciencia*, were neither few nor small, at the end they have been overshadowed by the achievement of dreaming and making real the communication project. Under the leadership of Miguel Laufer, the setbacks he had to face and overcome –which were many and very big– only highlight his ability, dedication and devotion to the task at hand, to keep *Interciencia*, at the pinnacle of excellence and, even, expand its magnitude. Indeed, while until the middle of the year 2000 the periodicity of the journal was bimonthly, from then on its frequency became monthly, an editorial feast that can only be described as titanic. Twelve times each year, *Interciencia*, brings to the researchers of the world the breakthroughs in the frontiers of knowledge achieved by the colleagues of the Americas.

Under the supervision of Miguel Laufer, *Interciencia*, ceased to be a journal published on paper and financed primarily by countries that came to feel honored to count it among their assets, to become a electronic journal, with not insignificant financial problems and based in a country very distant from the one who saw her born and grow. Miguel Laufer's time came to an end with this issue. And although he and Roche can feel honored by the trail they have left in the region, whoever follows in their footsteps in the direction of the magazine is obliged to continue the course they have indicated. And it is that Latin America needs to make its voice heard in the concert of knowledge-producing nations, and no one better for this than *Interciencia*, the natural vehicle for disseminating the advances generated in our region.

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