

In memoriam

Prof. Dr. Susumu Nisizaki Ota (1942 – 2019)

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From the soul 魂, from the gaze of the student who is inspired by the teacher, who takes him as a model, who in many ways imitates him, from the gaze of the student who becomes a colleague and then a friend, from that gaze and with deep affection, I write this life story addressed to the collective, who may not have known his outstanding qualities.

Professor Susumu Nisizaki Ota came from a Japanese family that arrived in Uruguay during the Second World War, a host country that offered peace, stability and work. He was born in our country at the dawn of the 1940s, and during his childhood, he lived in a humble neighborhood, where workers live, and attended public primary and secondary education institutions. With the simplicity and social sensibility that marked his childhood and youth years, and by honoring 道義心 the land of his ancestors, he became an example of the fusion of the best characteristics of both peoples.

He studied Dentistry at Universidad de la República and began teaching early, at the end of the 1960s. He pioneered 先駆的な in our institution by starting postgraduate studies when he pursued a Master's Degree at Osaka Dental University in Japan. In 1991, by presenting merits and passing relevant examinations, he was appointed as Professor of the Department of Rehabilitation, Removable Prosthodontics I and Gerodontology, where he worked until 2017.

He contributed to strengthening the institution, both given the quantity and quality of his work, promoting innovative changes in the discipline, and by introducing Gerodontology, the first recognized dental specialty in Uruguay, making it available at our university. He led the department until December 2018.

He dedicated his life to teaching and practicing dentistry with excellence. He was a great motivator, an incessant searcher of young people to introduce to the teaching activity; he always insisted on the need to study, research and innovate as an ethical duty to society.

We affectionately nicknamed him "Nisi" because, without a doubt, he had earned our affection 好意. Many of the older teachers among us, who currently hold positions at the school, were his disciples and we were encouraged and motivated by him to start teaching. His colleagues and friends remember him for his immense joy and generosity during teamwork. Nisi taught us many things, always immersed in his deep love 愛 for teaching. He was my group teacher, he was the one that invited me to research and teach, he was my advisor, my academic counselor and since the late 1970s, we traveled together this stimulating path of university life.

His curiosity and interest in developing and progressing led him to be always one step ahead of his peers. A permanent reader of scientific publications, he quickly detected and disseminated all advances in dentistry, especially those in his field of study. He was linked to multiple publications, Director of Annals of the School of Dentistry, Director of the journal *Odontología Uruguaya* of the Uruguayan Dentistry Association and member of the Editorial Committee of *Odontoestomatología*.

He is the father 父 of national Gerodontology, promoting it in our country and abroad. He developed a national school of Removable Functional Prosthodontics and Prosthodontics with Piezography, disseminating these concepts around South America, Europe and Japan. He published several scientific papers, taught hundreds of courses and conferences in many countries around the world, presided over congresses abroad and was awarded several international prizes.

He had a key role in promoting academic exchange through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), managing over 10 scholarships for young teachers from our school jointly with the Embassy of Japan. In 2002-03, he was hired by the School of Dentistry at the University of Osaka, Japan, as a Visiting Foreign Professor.

On April 30, 2018, the Ambassador of Japan, on behalf of the Emperor, awarded him “The Order of the Rising Sun - Golden Rays” 旭日章 (Kyokujitsu-shō), a distinction which goes back over a century, awarded to him in recognition of the excellence of his work in scientific cooperation and exchange in Dentistry.

From the soul, 魂 and with deep gratitude for his valuable contribution to institutional life, we bid him farewell and mention some of his best virtues: work, study, search, motivation, love, generosity, joy, humanism and leadership 指導力.

Thank you ありがとうございます and Sayōnara, dear Nisi!

Prof. Dr. Fernando Fuentes Loureiro
Director of the School of Graduates