Nelson Fausto (1936–2012)

Nelson Fausto died on April 2, 2012 after a long battle against multiple myeloma. Despite the illness, he kept his human and professional activity with the same outstanding profile that gave him international scientific recognition as well as respect and friendship from thousands of colleagues, collaborators, and trainees. His successful combination of joy of life and work commitment has been repeatedly stated after his death, and is likely the result of his personal history. He was born in 1936 in São Paulo, Brazil. "Little Nelson" was the third of three brothers within a family of Eastern Europe origins. His interest in science consolidated at the University of São Paulo Medical School. He graduated in 1960 and in 1962 he traveled to the University of Wisconsin, for a 2-year postdoctoral fellowship in liver regeneration. The brutal military coup initiated in Brazil in 1964 (lasted until 1985) changed that plan forever. Nelson had his own history of political activism and saw members of his own family detained or fleeing for their lives. He decided to stay in the United States and in 1967 he became faculty at the Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island, where a new Program in Medicine (now the Brown Alpert Medical School) had just started. He joined as Assistant Professor of Medical Science and continued his successful research program studying liver regeneration. In 1983, he became founding chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at Brown and later Brown’s Asa Messer Professor. Between 1967 and 1987, Fausto organized and directed the General Pathology course at Brown for first-year medical students. His enthusiasm and dedication were repeatedly recognized by Distinguished Teaching Awards from the medical students. Sure some of them pursued research because of his influence. In 1994, the University of Washington Medical School hired him as Chairman of the Department of Pathology. Under his leadership, the Department held the largest number of NIH grants in the country for a long period of time and consolidated as a leading force in modern pathology. Simultaneously, he kept an active research with continued contributions expanding the knowledge in liver growth, regeneration, and cancer. Trainees and fellows enjoyed his capacity to embark in new projects, which would have kept going forever if he would still be alive.

He was President of the American Society of Investigative Pathology (ASIP) from 2004 to 2005. For nearly a decade (1992–2001), he served as Editor-in-Chief of ASIP’s flagship journal *The American Journal of Pathology*. Under his leadership, its impact factor rose to its highest levels. In 2010, in recognition of his role as past president, as founding editor of the *Journal of Molecular Diagnostics* and as “an individual who represents the highest ideals in pathology and medicine,” he received the Gold-Headed Cane award from ASIP, the highest honor offered by this organization. He was also awarded the Spinoza Chair (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2000), the Distinguished Scientist Award from the American Liver Foundation (2004), the Distinguished Achievement Award from the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (2009), the Arnaldo Vieira de Carvalho Medal from the University of São Paulo (2009), and the Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Pathology Chairs (2012). From 2007 to 2009, he joined the Founding Board of the International Liver Cancer Association. He was co-editor of the “Robbins and Cotran Pathologic Basis of Disease” and Arias’ “The Liver: Biology and Pathobiology”. Through editorials, reviews, original articles, and books, he disseminated his knowledge to an unlimited number of researchers. He has influenced several generations and, specifically, those that have been directly mentored during his professional career. This group does not merely include the large number of trainees, fellows, and researchers that have joined his laboratory to learn and run research studies, but also those that have interacted with him thanks to his intense traveling to give lectures at scientific meetings and educational events. He was always available to exchange ideas with those attending his talks whatever their degree or age. He was always ready to generously expand any data and also to offer advise to those who asked for it. Because of his easy going character, his frequent traveling and his willingness to learn and understand all aspects of life, he was always a gem in any conversation about topics such as politics, art, and culture traditions. Family and friends have enjoyed his great cooking capacities, while his own interests included art, especially primitive and Native American art, gardens and sculpture, voracious reading, music (classical, opera, ethnic, and old style jazz), and photographing birds. He also had a deep commitment to philanthropy,
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creating and contributing to several funds. In summary, we have lost a superb scientist and an outstanding individual who had successfully blended work, family, friendship and human values.

Nelson Fausto is survived by his wife, Ann De Lancey, his brothers, Boris Fausto of Brazil and Ruy Fausto of France and Brazil, his nephews, Sérgio and Carlos, and niece, Luisa, and three great-nephews, Miguel, Felipe, and Antonio.

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