

Dr. Pedro Antonio López Saura



The Editorial Board of the *Biotecnología Aplicada* journal and the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB) mourn the loss of our dear Dr Pedro Antonio López Saura (Havana, September 26, 1947), a distinguished Cuban scientist who passed away last June 17, 2016.

Dr Lopez Saura graduated from Medical School in Havana in 1969. After entering the National Center for Scientific Research of Cuba (CNIC) he received a Master's degree in 1971 and a first degree as a Clinical Biochemistry Specialist in 1973. In 1978 he received his PhD, while in 1981 he became Senior Researcher, and in 1986 he received a second degree as a Clinical Biochemistry Specialist.

He had the honor of becoming one of the six scientists chosen by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz to start the work on Biotechnology in Cuba in the year 1981, and he formed part of the team that produced leukocytic interferon for the first time in Cuba on May 28, 1981. Dr Lopez Saura was a charter member of the Center for Biological Research, in Havana, founded in

1982, of which he later became Director; he also formed part of the Regional Executive Committee of the Biotechnology Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, within the Managing Committee for the Establishment of the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, sponsored by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNESCO. This work would lead to the later foundation of the CIGB in Cuba, of which he was a charter member.

As a pioneer in Cuba on clinical trials for biotechnology products and their registration before the national and foreign regulatory authorities, he was a renowned national expert in that field and became the Director for Clinical Trials and Regulatory Issues of the CIGB until 2013.

Dr Lopez Saura participated in more than 300 domestic and international events, 40 international courses, and 90 technical and scientific missions abroad. He authored more than 140 institutional achievements, several patents, and Annual Awards of the Cuban Academy of Sciences, of which he was a Permanent Member. He was also selected Member of Honor of the Cuban Immunology Association.

With an extensive career in teaching, starting in 1961 when he participated in the Cuban Literacy Campaign, he tutored 37 Master and Doctorate dissertations, and was a permanent faculty member in training courses for scientific and technical personnel. It should be highlighted that since 2013 he became adjunct professor of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM), and Main Professor of Morpho-physiology I and IV at the Higher Institute of Medical Sciences of Havana since 2014.

As a prolific communicator of Cuban science, 258 contributions for scientific papers appearing in mainstream journals and specialized books were authored by him. His condition as a charter member and one of *Biotecnología Aplicada's* journal most enthusiastic promoters, led him to make invaluable contributions to the journal as a Member of the Editorial Board since 1984, the Thematic Editor for Therapy and Action Mechanisms of Biomolecules, and the most productive author with 78 published papers.

As shown by his achievements, Dr Pedro Antonio López Saura was a brilliant and outstanding scientist who devoted his life to enhancing Cuban science, biotechnology and biomedicine, with devotion, modesty, discipline and the highest sense of responsibility and love for his country.

May this editorial serve as a modest but earnest homage to his professional career on the 69th anniversary of his birth and within the framework of the 30th Anniversary of the inauguration of CIGB, and may this express our commitment to follow his example and multiply it in the younger generations of researchers.

Havana, September 26, 2016

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