

Artigo

Testimonials from Ex-students and Collaborators

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Depoimentos de Ex-alunos e Colaboradores

Resumo: Neste número especial da Revista Virtual de Química (RVq), dedicada ao registro da aposentadoria do Dr. Antonio Monge - Professor Catedrático da Universidade de Navarra e Diretor científico do Centro de Investigação em Farmacobiologia Aplicada (CIFA) - são historiados alguns depoimentos espontâneos de ex-alunos e colaboradores, que registram neste número o reconhecimento à trajetória científica do homenageado e lembram algumas de suas principais características e virtudes.

Palavras-chave: Prof. Antonio Monge.

Abstract

In this special issue of the Virtual Journal of Chemistry ("Revista Virtual de Química", RVq), dedicated to record the retirement of Dr Antonio Monge – Full Professor at the University of Navarra and Scientific Director of the Center for Applied Pharmacobiology Research (CIFA) - are registered some spontaneous testimonials of ex-students and collaborators, aiming to recognize the scientific trajectory of the honored and to remember some of his main features and virtues.

Keywords: Prof. Antonio Monge.

* Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Laboratório de Avaliação e Síntese de Substâncias Bioativas (LASSBio®), CCS, Cidade Universitária, CP 68024, CEP 21921-520, Rio de Janeiro-RJ, Brasil.

✉ lidia@lassbio.icb.ufrj.br

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Testimonials from Ex-students and collaborators

Silvia P. Silanes, Ignacio A. Moraza, Silvia G. Ruiz, José I. RecaldeIruzun, Ana Maria Ochoa R. Mendibil, Victor Martínez-Merino, Yolanda S. Sánchez, Juan Carlos del Castillo, Estrella G. Alvarez, Patricio H. Gómez, Teresa Alvarez, Gildardo R. Sánchez, Argimiro Rivero, Luis Orts, Estefanía Berjón, Lidia M. Lima,* Mercedes González, Hugo Cerecetto

* Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Laboratório de Avaliação e Síntese de Substâncias Bioativas (LASSBio®), CCS, Cidade Universitária, CP 68024, CEP 21921-520, Rio de Janeiro-RJ, Brasil.

* lidia@lassbio.icb.ufrj.br

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Dr. Silvia Pérez Silanes. During my training at the University of Navarra, I realized the prestige that Dr. Monge had garnered among my colleagues and professors. As a student, I enjoyed his stories about trips to Latin America, scientific meetings, and his lessons about the importance of medicinal chemistry had me convinced. Throughout my career I have had the honor of working side by side with him. We have talked a lot and, some of the time he was a boss but most of the time, he was a friend. He always says that our job is not synthesizing molecules, but curing people who suffer. His vision has kept him one step ahead of the others and has allowed him to carry out research projects with pharmaceutical companies, to create a research center, and to conceive a Master program, when this way of working was previously unknown in Spain. I have learned a lot of chemistry from him, but above all I have learned that real professional success means a job well done, respect for others, team support, hard work, and humbleness. His great kindness has made him admired, loved and respected both inside and outside his country. Silvia Pérez Silanes – Professor at the University of Navarra. Coordinator of the Master Program in Research, Development, and Innovation of Novel Drugs.



Dr. Ignacio Aldana Moraza. During the last year of my degree in Pharmacy, Professor Antonio Monge called me to his office to express an interest in my future plans. I knew his knowledge of drug research from his Pharmaceutical Chemistry lessons. Prof. Monge clearly communicated his idea of working with the goal of developing compounds that could become useful drugs to cure diseases. It was a real challenge, and one as difficult to achieve as it was exciting and motivating.

I did not hesitate to join his department and to start my journey in the world of medicinal chemistry under his direction. My PhD project focused on the cardiovascular system, with indole and pyridazine-indole derivatives.

Compounds were designed as potential peripheral vasodilators for the treatment of hypertension, a therapeutic area that represented a major challenge as more selective, safer and more effective drugs were needed. This experimental job became really attractive and defined my final vocation regarding the research and development of new drugs. It was the beginning of many projects of great scientific interest directed by Prof. Monge that encompassed different therapeutic areas, always following the most innovative standards of the moment.

It has been a pleasure and a real honor to work with Prof. Monge throughout these years. Ignacio Aldana - Professor at University of Navarra.



Dr. Silvia Galiano Ruiz. It is a great honor for me to be able to pay homage through these lines to Prof. Monge, who has made a lasting impression in my professional career.

All the people who know him and who have had the opportunity to work with him love him, admire him, and respect him as a great professional and a great person. For several generations, he has been able to express his knowledge with warmth and conviction, as well as his experience and most of all, the importance of thinking with our hearts. As a great defender of Latin America and its people, he conveyed his passion and affection for working alongside these countries that are so close to us.

As a distinguished professor, he has given us the gift of his wisdom and experience always accompanied by a passion for teaching with kindness along with a heightened sense of social justice. With endless love, he has always fought for the development of the most disadvantaged societies through the field of medicinal chemistry.

He is an example of human potential applied to achieve goals, overcome obstacles and start dialogue. I here express my acknowledgement of his academic and research career, but above all, of his great human capacity. For those who like me have studied under him and shared many good times, I have nothing further to say aside from: THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR BEING A GREAT MASTER! Silvia Galiano Ruiz- Researcher. Drug R&D Unit. University of Navarra.



Dr. José Ignacio Recalde Iruzun. In 1984, during the final year of my degree in Biology and enthralled by carbon chemistry, heterocycles, and their interaction with life, I started my thesis as the odd biologist at the Department of Organic and Pharmaceutical Chemistry. Subsequently, Dr. Monge gave me the opportunity to get my PhD there. Soon, the director of R&D of Viscofan (then a small and little known company) requested assistance from the Department in the development and resolution of various technical issues unrelated to the heterocycles and related to food technology. Since then, I have combined my PhD work with the resolution of issues for Viscofan as an interesting new pattern of industry-university collaboration. In 1989,

after defending my doctoral thesis on indoltriazines and their effects on biological systems, I moved to the newly founded CIFA*, where I was one of the first workers under the direction of Prof. Monge. Creating CIFA was the most visible proof of Dr. Monge's interest in combining academia and real world industry.

I continued working at CIFA in contracts between Viscofan and the technology transfer office (ICT). In 1990, I joined the R&D Department of Viscofan, which I have had the honor to run for several years.



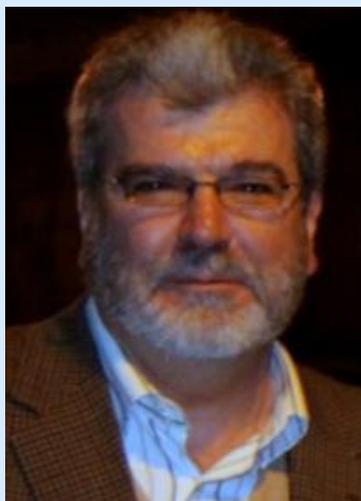
Dr. Ana Maria Ochoa de Retana Mendibil. I learned from Antonio Monge that commitment and conviction of scientific knowledge should serve society through the development of useful solutions. This practical and realistic philosophy, which many of his collaborators have learned from him, has permeated his entire career. This shows, more than ever, the dramatic importance that financial resources for academic research achievements should have in terms of economic and social interest to this country. Antonio Monge has always been very clear about it. José Ignacio Recalde (Iñaki) - Director Corporativo de Investigación, Desarrollo y Calidad del grupo Viscofan. *CIFA: Center for Applied Pharmacobiology Research.

I started working with Dr. Antonio Monge in 1982, when he offered me the opportunity to join his group in the Department of Organic Chemistry at the University of Navarra, in order to complete my thesis for the degree in Pharmacy. I also finished my Ph.D. there in 1986, and continued working as a researcher for an extra year. That time in my life was very important, both personally and professionally. The support and teachings that I received from him during my time in the Department of Organic Chemistry have allowed me to complete my training and to start my very satisfying academic career, and for that I am really grateful to him.

Although for several years I have been carrying out my work at the University of the Basque Country, with a different research group, I could always count on his support and willingness to collaborate anytime it was required, whether on conferences, these panels, and so on.

I want to express here my sincere appreciation for his work at the university, both in management, and in teaching and research, as he has always displayed great professionalism, dedication to teaching and he has developed great research of international relevance. I would stress the importance he has always given to personal relationships, considering them to be a

priority. All of this makes him a benchmark and unquestioned model for all of those who know him. He is one of those people who have contributed so much to make academia an exciting field not only from the intellectual standpoint, but also as a life experience. Ana Maria Ochoa de Retana Mendibil - Profesora Titular del Departamento de Química Orgánica I, Universidad del País Vasco, España.



Dr. Victor Martínez-Merino. Prof. Monge was my Ph.D. dissertation advisor (1982-85), which was awarded a special doctorate at the University of Navarra. Then we co-advised two doctoral theses in the field of pharmaceutical chemistry, ones authored by Dr. Carmen Sanmartín Grijalva (1985-88) and Dr. Maria Angeles Simon Aicua (1986-89), respectively. The first one premiered structure-activity relationship studies at the University of Navarra, and it was also awarded a special doctorate.

After these seven years of close collaboration with prof. Monge, I would like to highlight his leadership fostering new ideas, and working towards the means to implement them. Since my early days at the Public University of Navarra (November 1989), we have always maintained a good collaboration on specific issues.

Prof. Monge has always been interested in combining university research and industrial application, and he has achieved numerous research contracts with pharmaceutical companies. Equally concerned about putting the University of Navarra in the highest levels of representation, he has become part of highest national and international level Academies and Committees in the fields of Chemistry and Pharmacy. All of this testifies to a successful professional life dedicated to creating and leading a world-renowned research group, which has kept very close ties with other research groups, especially those in Latin America. I can say that he can retire with the satisfaction of accomplishment. Victor Martínez-Merino - Profesor Titular de Química Orgánica, Universidad Pública de Navarra, 31006 Pamplona (Spain).



Dr. M. Yolanda Sainz Sánchez. Prior to working with Dr. Monge, he was my Pharmaceutical Chemistry professor in my senior year majoring in Pharmacy. They were early in the morning lessons at 8am, during which he would convey his knowledge of chemistry. We often spoke of his travels, especially to South America, which have always informed his view of an extensive scientific community worldwide. We were told Pharmaceutical Chemistry had more to do with life than what we young students of Pharmacy had previously imagined. I joined the Department of Organic and Pharmaceutical Chemistry in 1992. I had the privilege of having Dr. Monge as the advisor of my thesis project on his beloved quinoxalines. The Department had many ongoing projects, many of them started by Dr. Monge, and I was very

lucky to be able to learn to truly love chemistry with him.

Thanks to him as well, I could understand the meaning of the quote "When one door closes, a

window opens" (quote hitherto unknown). I have learned that we must never neglect our personal lives, and should always try to spend great moments with family, friends, and coworkers. That we should always work to the best of our abilities, being creative while responsible and honest about our work. Thanks to Dr. Monge for teaching me that chemistry is not just about structures, and that if we love what we do, we are closer to happiness. Yolanda Sainz Sánchez –Head of the Department of Analytical Development in the biotechnological company PHARMAMAR (placed in Madrid, Spain, and member of the Zeltia Group).



Dr. Juan Carlos del Castillo. I was a student under Dr. Monge from September 1989 to May 1992, a period in which he advised my doctoral thesis with the title: "New Quinoxaline derivatives with activity against serotonin receptors".

Before the retirement of my Master and friend Antonio Monge, I was asked to write a brief review about him. I'm not going to say who Antonio is, and what he represents for the Spanish and Latin American scientific communities, and specifically for Medical Chemistry. His teaching, his numerous publications and institutional work as President of the RSEQT and his positions in various Academies of Pharmacy – they say it all professionally. So, let me focus on more personal aspects.

The first time I spoke with Antonio was back around April or May, 1989. At the time, we had just created a small unit of Medicinal Chemistry at Glaxo Laboratories. My background was that of an Organic Chemist with little experience of two years at the University of Alcalá de Henares and 3 years leading the Glaxo Unit. With that, and after seeing an advertisement on the First Master Program in Drug Research and Development, I picked up the phone and called Antonio in order to get information on this Program. Antonio, with his usual persuasion and his communication skills, took less than five minutes to convince me that his Master Program was ideal for my training. I quit my job at Glaxo, and so in September 1989 I met the man who, from that time on became, first my Master, advising my Master Degree and then my Ph.D., but most of all, a friend. From then on, we have only met occasionally for conferences and congresses, always surrounded by former students and old friends, and always alongside his wife Aurora. For him, family is the most important thing we have. And so, each time we have met, always feeling like we had just seen one another, his first question has always been about my family: "How is Carmina, how are each of your children?" He has always cared about each small problem they have faced, and has always acted as my Master, reminding me that family is the biggest treasure in our lives.

Needless to say, I will always be grateful for that first phone conversation that convinced me to apply for the Master Degree. And so I went on to the most rewarding adventure of my life, because, as he often talked about myself as an example for his new students, I completed the Master Program, the Ph.D. Program, and I met my wife and mother of my children, who was a classmate during my Master Program. But I have to add that, above all, I have met an extraordinary person, whom I can only define by paraphrasing the poet Machado, saying he is a man in the best sense of the word: GOOD.

Antonio, before your retirement, let me thank you for letting me be part of your life and allowing me to be your disciple. Thank you with my entire heart, MASTER! Juan Carlos del Castillo –Technician of Business Development of Personal Health Division, Lacer Laboratorios SA, Barcelona, Spain.



Dr. Estrella García Alvarez. I remember my Ph.D., which took place between the departments of Genetics and Organic Chemistry, with Doctors López de Ceráin and Recalde, and you, Antonio, leading the entire research project. As for the research work for my thesis, I went to Unilever and Huntington (UK) for two summers to learn new techniques in Genetic Toxicology, which helped me to defend the doctoral thesis in January 1991.

But it was in the summer of 1990, when you personally offered me to help me get started on my professional career, a career that currently makes me so proud and happy. This

happened when I was finishing writing my thesis for submission to the Secretariat. We discussed the possibility of going to the ICI, England, to work for a year in a collaborative project that was established by Plan Farma.

His ability to get interesting collaborations and projects has always garnered my greatest admiration. During that year in ICI: Alderly Park (Macclesfield / Manchester), I learned to interact personally and professionally. I joined and experienced what a Big Pharma Company was. There were some tough times, but also others with great satisfaction that I enjoyed and during which I matured a lot. I still remember when Paco had his car stolen. His precious red Turbo Ford XR Escort, right in front of his house! We can become so fragile.

Thanks to all that experience, when the project was nearing completion, I could find a job in Barcelona, at Almirall Laboratories SA (now renamed Almirall) where I have spent the last 20 years and have been able to progress professionally in ways I never thought I would. Also, I am still in touch with the Master of R & D + i, which allows me to return to the University of Navarra, the place where I was trained, and thanks to that I can continue to enjoy contact with students.

I thank him wholeheartedly the opportunity to go abroad he gave me. I could never thank him enough. It's a real pleasure to have had a teacher, co-supervisor, project leader and COACH like him!!

Thanks for everything. Now, it is time for enjoying family and hobbies! Thank you. Estrella García - PhD Head of Global Clinical Operations R&D Sant Feliu de Llobregat Almirall, S.A.



Dr. Patricio Huenchunir Gómez. Antonio Monge was my Ph.D. advisor (1995-1998), in a project entitled "Design, Synthesis and Preliminary Biological Evaluation of New Agents Against Obesity". I had previously obtained a Bachelor of Pharmacy and a Pharmaceutical Chemistry Professional Degree at the University of Chile (1994).

From the time of my first contact, Antonio helped me and encouraged me to get a Ph.D. in Pharmacy at the University of Navarra. Thanks to his support, and a Scholarship from the Spanish International Cooperation Agency, I was able to carry out the doctorate under his guidance. They were three years of intense and pleasant work, where I can say "I learned to work" with him, from

the professional point of view, but above all, from a human one. A job well done, trust in people, magnanimity to deliver knowledge, responsibility, and many, many things, could be summarized as follows: with Antonio, I was attending a school of virtues.

After my PhD, I returned to Chile, becoming Professor in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of the Andes (1998-2000), and then Assistant Professor in the Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Chemistry, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (2000-2010), in the subjects of Pharmaceutical Technology, Technology Cosmetics, and Pharmacokinetics and Biopharmaceutics. Subsequently, from August 2010 to June 2011, I served as Head of Department of the National Drug Agency in the Public Health Institute of Chile, and Acting Director. From June 2011 to date, I have worked at the Health Ministry, as Head of the Department of Drug Policy and Health Professions, Division of Health Public Policy and Promotion, the Undersecretary of Public Health.

During my years as an academic, I tried to conduct scientific research applied in the same way as I had learned from Antonio, and it was focused on the synthesis, biological evaluation and development of new drugs, especially for treatment of Alzheimer's, obesity, cancer, cataracts and antivirals for both human and veterinary diseases. Today, while I work on many different tasks at the Ministry of Health, specifically being in charge of the Public Policy for the pharmaceutical industry, I have tried to keep the style and form of work I have learned from Antonio.

I have no words to thank the dedication and love that Antonio took to me, from the first moment, and his support over the years.

That's why I can say ... just ... Thank you ... Thank you Antonio ... For all the good you have done in all your years of work ...Patricio Huenchunir Gómez –Head of the Department of Medicines Policy and Health Professions.



Dr. Teresa Alvarez. For sure that many things come to mind when thinking about Antonio Monge, especially after many years of intense work and university life. There are many possible perspectives. Dr. Monge was my advisor at the Faculty of Pharmacy and earlier he had been my teacher in Pharmaceutical Chemistry. Everyone who has completed a doctoral thesis knows what it takes: how much effort, commitment, endless hours at the lab, among flasks, spectra ..., time for reading and reflection. That is really the work of the researcher, which one cannot imagine when it starts and where you learn every day. I personally thank Antonio for the opportunity he gave me by accepting me at the Department of Organic Chemistry and Pharmaceuticals, and allowing me to

start my professional career.

Since then, time has gone on and the relationship of teacher / supervisor has changed into one of friends, as he always says, with whom you can discuss your work and concerns. He always listens to you, he is happy for your achievements, even personal ones, and he encourages you every day.

All these memories and gratitude will have no expiration date, but now Antonio has embarked on a new path.

Thank you very much, master. Teresa Alvarez - Project Manager VISCOFÁN. CIFA. University of Navarra.



Dr. Gildardo Rivera Sánchez. Don Antonio Monge Vega was my doctoral advisor, alongside Doña Silvia Pérez Silanes, at the Drug Research and Development Unit at the University of Navarra in 2002. My admission was as part of the obesity project sponsored by Servier and developed by the team made up, at this time, of Antonio Moreno, Silvia Galiano, Laura Juanenea and that grew with the addition of Nuria Cirauqui and Javier Cirauqui. All of us received instruction and experience from Don Antonio Monge Vega, considering human and professional aspects during our training stay in the laboratory in an entirely humanitarian and disinterested way. With this approach he encouraged us to gather all the effort needed for the development of the project with the aim of maintaining or improving people's health. At the

conclusion of this stage, his words continued to be of full support in all aspects.

When I joined as a professor-researcher at the Autonomous University of Tamaulipas, Mexico, he continued offering unconditional support, knowing that a rough path was ahead of me. He allowed us to enjoy all his knowledge and experience in the subject of Medicinal Chemistry with a Keynote lecture, both at our university and at the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon in Mexico, reaffirming the bonds of cooperation and friendship. It was just a sample of the enthusiasm and dedication that led him to travel through Latin America in order to create and strengthen links in the design, synthesis and evaluation of bioactive molecules, especially in neglected diseases and that is a reflection of one of his mottos: "the North should look to the South".

In more than 10 years of knowing him, and without mentioning his innumerable professional achievements, I highlight without doubt his human qualities such as humility, leadership, friendship, among many who he has shared with all of those who have had the pleasure of knowing him and sharing unforgettable moments. Gildardo Rivera Sánchez - Profesor Titular C, Centro de Biotecnología Genómica, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, 88710, Reynosa, México.



Dr. Argimiro Rivero. I finished my degree in pharmacy at the University of Navarra in 1992 and I was, like many others, somewhat confused about the future. After much thought, I went to talk to the person I thought could guide me. So, I ended up in the Department of Organic and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, University of Navarra, under the tutelage of Professor Monge. And so D. Antonio became my guide and support for several years of my life in Pamplona. So much so that, in my own family, he was known as "my father in Pamplona". Thanks to his support, help and understanding, I completed my training not only as a person interested in

pharmaceutical research, but also as a person in general.

Listening to D. Antonio was a pleasant gift during my degree and especially during my Ph.D. thesis. His extensive training and pharmaceutical interest have enabled him to integrate additional knowledge that improved and made greater any subject he taught. His classes were like a real conference, complete with countless references to his special relationship with Latin America and his commitment to support research in different countries.

A phrase that I heard several times from him was: "no one is indispensable." In many cases, he

might have been right, but for sure that many of those who learned with him, and especially from him, do not share his opinion in this case.

His name is a symbol of perfection and dedication to the work he undertook. I believe that his students, CIFA, the faculty of Pharmacy, the University of Navarra, and pharmaceutical research world are indebted to D. Antonio. As far as I'm concerned, I hope I will pay off in a small part of this large debt with this small contribution. Argimiro Rivero Rosales - Full Professor of School of Marine Sciences, University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.



Dr. Luis Orts. It was 1991 and the second year of the Masters in Research and Drug Development at the University of Navarra was almost starting. That choice was uncertain for me, as a newly qualified pharmacist from Granada. The prestige of the University of Navarra had been established and solidified by the relevance of Dr. Antonio Monge as an academic personality and professional in our field. I took a chance and, in 1992 I become a member of III Master in Drug R & D for the

following 15 months. A safe future in the familiar food business was left behind, but that chance on Dr. Monge and his Master in Drugs had a special appeal.

Everything was new to me: it was another University but the academic walls turned clear and became firm pillars for my professional projection under Antonio's CIFA project. That way, a journey full of admiration for Dr. Monge began for me. He was my master's thesis advisor and my professor at the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, where I was fortunate to be. I remember in particular a unique and innovative course, by that time's and even by current standards, called Pharmaceutical Deontology. He taught it with reliability, sufficiency and humility - that humility carved by his hard and tireless work. These experiences are an essential part of my career, even today.

I was lucky and I got the honor of having Dr. Monge as my Thesis Advisor in Medicinal Chemistry, and he included me in his young team of doctoral researchers. There I received nothing but human and professional generosity. He kept nothing to himself; he formed professionals by always imparting life and science experience, making a deep impression on us.

He broke new ground, but to all who have enjoyed Dr. Monge, we will remember his experience and his noble, generous and courageous life. I hope he will receive a deep and true admiration from so far. Thank you and congratulations. Dr. Luis Orts - Director General probeltegrupo, Murcia / España.



Estefanía Berjón. I was under 21 when I started working at CIFA, as secretary to the Director, Professor Antonio Monge. That was fifteen years ago. At that moment, I took on my responsibilities, impressed not only by the prestige of a college like the University of Navarra, but also by the career of Dr. Monge. It only took a short time for my fears and insecurities to disappear, thanks to his close and friendly manner, since he trusted me from the very first moment.

During this time, I have witnessed his tireless capacity for work. He is a perfect example of dedication and perseverance. He has transmitted to all of us his commitment to the research center and the University of Navarra. At CIFA, we undertake the tasks as they arrive, regardless of the delivery. But we do all this in an atmosphere of trust, closeness and tranquility. People are the most important thing to him, and he has always been concerned about family and colleagues' well-being.

Many projects, reports, protocols, articles ... have been signed in his office. However, not all have been professional meetings. Researchers, students in the Master Program, and employees have shared with him our joys and good news and also our problems and concerns. We have always received his understanding and words of encouragement, and sensible advice.

Antonio and his wife Aurora, professor at the School of Architecture at our University, have been involved in many important moments of my life and I thank them very much for their willingness and affection.

Dr. Monge, enjoy this new stage. We will miss you in CIFA! Estefanía Berjón - Executive Secretary. CIFA.



Dr. Lídia Moreira Lima. My first professional contact with Dr. Antonio Monge took place in February 2004, during his second visit as an international lecturer in the Summer School in Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry (III EVQFM in 1997 and XEVQFM in 2004), organized by the Laboratory of Evaluation and Synthesis of Bioactive Substances (LASSBio®, <http://www.farmacia.ufrj.br/lasbio/>) of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Aware of the role of scientific leadership in the field of Medicinal Chemistry taken on by Dr. Monge in Spain and

in Europe as a whole, on that occasion we had the opportunity to talk and set a date for the beginning of my Post-Doctoral position at his laboratory. In October of 2004, as a CAPES (BR) scholarship, I arrived in Pamplona (Navarra, Spain) and started my Post-Doctorate under Dr. Antonio Monge's supervision. Promptly, the image of competent and renowned scientist – proven by his impeccable credentials and by the hundreds of scientific articles published in the best Medicinal Chemistry periodicals – and the image of articulate, fair, and visionary manager, was replaced by the image of a simple, humane and kind man, devoted to his students, colleagues, and subordinates. During this period, I noticed his daily presence in the laboratory at the early hours of the morning (8am) - before heading to CIFA, as Director - and in the middle of the afternoon (5pm). The weekly meeting at his office, with students and fellow Professors, was another trademark. At these meetings, students were questioned on their lab activities, results were discussed, and the following week's activities were planned. He would

also recommend specific reading for each project. Without a doubt, he had an amazing ability to remain organized. Watching him lead and manage his lab, I learned that – even when faced with the hardest task, or the most stubborn person, or the hardest challenge or the greatest adversity – hope and kindness must persevere.

What can I wish for someone who has been, during his entire career, a model of dedication, righteousness, seriousness, and honesty? At least much and much acknowledgement!!!! Thank you for having taken me into your lab. You should know that, in many of your scientific disciples, a seed has been planted, one that will grow and bloom into many of your ideals and virtues, keeping them, hopefully, forthcoming in the present and forever in the future. Lídia Moreira Lima – Associate Professor of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.



Mercedes González and Dr. Hugo Cerecetto. Between 1992 and 1994, we had the pleasure of being advised in our doctoral studies at the University of Navarra by the beloved Dr. Antonio Monge. During that wonderful time, we learned about organic chemistry and medicinal chemistry, but we were mostly taught by Antonio how to manage and coordinate groups of inter- and multidisciplinary research.

Subsequently, our academic pathways inextricably intertwined, so we continue to receive the gift of Antonio's knowledge. We had the pleasure of being part of the CYTED network coordinated by Antonio - Latin American Research Network for the Design and Development of Drugs, between 1999 and 2002.

This network was developed thanks to Antonio's efforts, so that Latin America would have a solid academic structure in the field of Medicinal Chemistry. Later on, new research projects were consolidated between Antonio's team and ours as our Uruguayan students, Maria Laura Lavaggi, Mauricio Cabrera, Alicia Merlino and Martin Gabay, visited the Department of Organic Chemistry and CIFA to develop joint research. These activities have been carried out in another topic that has always concerned Antonio: neglected diseases. When the time came, our group also began offering its expertise to the academic interests of Antonio, either through IBEROAMERICANA CYTED NETWORK FOR THE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION OF ANTI-CHAGAS DRUGS network, which we coordinated between 2007 and 2010, or through experiments conducted in Uruguay for the interests of our Spanish colleagues.

The catalytic ability of Antonio has driven enterprises such as a book of Medicinal Chemistry for developing countries, alongside Robin Ganellin and sponsored by IUPAC, released in 2010 in an online version, eventually becoming a paper issue in 2011. 10 Latin American countries and 21 different academic centers were involved in this book.

Academically, Antonio has loved and devoted many hours to Medicinal Chemistry. Undoubtedly, the issue dearest to Antonio has been the world of quinoxaline dioxide, in which he has produced an extremely relevant volume of information.

On a personal level, Antonio has lived in a spiritual environment with his wife, Aurora, an architect with whom he has built a wonderful family. During their summer vacation, they always enjoy their large family near the Mediterranean Sea.

One of the most beautiful memories we have of Antonio, during our time in Pamplona, is of when Antonio used to dress as Wise Man, on Christmas, to visit the children hospitalized at the University Hospital of Navarra. That activity was away from science, but very close to the spirit of solidarity that Antonio has.

It is a great pleasure for us to participate in this commemorative edition. Antonio has been, for over 20 years, our teacher, our colleague and most of all, our family friend.

We are confident that he will continue to promote the development of Medicinal Chemistry and will remain a role model for all who admire his actions as a human being. Hugo Cerecetto and Mercedes Gonzalez – Professors of Faculty of Science, University of Uruguay, Montevideo.