
IN MEMORIAM

Abner Lellis Corrêa Vicentini (1929/1976)

The news came from the interior of the Brazilian state of São Paulo and rapidly spread about Brasília on the 10th August with inhuman cruelty: following a car crash which had occurred one month ago Abner Vicentini had died the previous night. His relatives and friends hesitated in accepting such implacable reality.

On that same day his funeral was accompanied in Brasília by a large number of people who were asking the same question: how was it possible to lose so tragically and brutally the life of one of the most capable and active Brazilian librarians and also a friend full of human warmth? It is clear that this obituary will not answer this question. It aims only to sketch some features of the unforgettable personality of Vicentini and to emphasize that question.

Abner Vicentini was born in Bebedouro, State of São Paulo, on 8/23/1929. He graduated in Library Science at the Foundation School of Sociology and Politics of São Paulo and in Law at the University of São Paulo. He began his professional career as a librarian at the São Paulo City Public Library and a few years later he was the Director of the Central Library of the Aeronautics Technical Center in São José dos Campos, São Paulo.

His success in the last post entitled him to a most challenging one as university librarian of the newly created University of Brasília. In the new capital university he revealed his capacity not only as an administrator but also as professor of the Library Science course from 1964 to 1968. After leaving the university he decided to go on living in Brasília, a decision which was delightfully received by all the librarians who were trying to build libraries from scratch in the new capital. He then accepted a post at the Ministry of Mines and Energy to plan and implement its information system.

Vicentini was an expert and a propagator of the UDC. For 10 years he was the chairman of the Brazilian Committee of UDC, since it was created in 1958 till 1968. His work in favour of the UDC resulted in the increasing publication and utilization of this classification in Brazil. Unfortunately he was not alive to see the launching of the Portuguese edition of the UDC medium edition during the Conference on Bibliographic Classification which was held in Rio last September. He had been an enthusiastic collaborator of this work.

Since 1960, when the 26th General Conference of FID met in Rio de Janeiro, he had established close contacts with this organization. He was the first Brazilian representative in the FID Central Classification Committee, a member of the Directing Council of FID and secretary of the Joint Subcommittee on UDC & Automation. His participation in the FID meetings transformed him in an international representative of Brazilian Library Science and Documentation and all his many foreign friends became Brazil's friends.

Among his many facets were publishing activities also. He had created a publishing house to produce texts in Portuguese for Brazilian librarians and documentalists. His major editorial effort was the publication of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules in Portuguese.

When he died he was the national manager of the joint project of FAO and Brazilian Government to develop a nation-wide agricultural information system in Brazil. This is a project which corresponds to the implementation of some original studies he had made years ago for the Ministry of Agriculture. He had been appointed by FAO as member of its International Panel of Experts on AGRIS and he was extremely happy with his new assignments.

It is impossible to summarize all his professional life in a few paragraphs. It is enough to say that he was a good man, a diligent professional and a person surrounded by many, many friends who will mourn his loss as long as his name exists.

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