

A Silence in the Astronomical and Meteorological promotion in Brazil



The Brazilian science is in mourning with deeply lamentable news of the death victim of a cerebral vascular accident (AVC) 28 July at 10h00min in Rio de Janeiro of our dear friend "Marcometa" and "Marcomedia" **Marcomede Rangel Nunes**.

He was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1951, in São Cristóvão, even district of the National Observatory (ON). The interest by sky came early. The mother, descendant of Indian, told like guided them by the stars. At eight old did a "telescope" of cardboard and charged to show the Moon his friends. 14 years old, always hit the door of the National Observatory and requested to see the telescopes. Until that a day let him. At the 17 age, he had begun to work there like aspirant, studying the Sun in 1968. He was contracted in 1976 by CNPq/ON, later statuary of CNPq and since 2000 of the Science and Technology Ministry (MCT). Worked on the departments of Astronomy (asteroid, comets and double stars), Geophysics (Gravimetric) and Hour Service of the National Observatory. Before his death was Scientific ON Director.

Marcomede name have appeared since the first astronomical observation bulletins of the National Observatory, in 1969.

Marcomede began his superior studies in Meteorology in UFRJ (1974-75), but he transferred to the Physics course of Humanities

Faculty Pedro II (FAHUPE), where he graduated at Physics in 1980. Soon after he specialized in Journalism at Estácio de Sá University (UESA) in 1983. He had Master in Brazilian Studies (Social Sciences) by State University of Rio de Janeiro - UERJ (1989), with theme: "About Brazilian Scientific Participation in Antarctic".

He was member founder of History of Science Brazilian Society - SBHC (1985). Press Brazilian Association Member (ABI); Member of Literature and Arts National Academy (ANLA). In 1980' was coordinator of the Solar Section of Astronomy Brazilian Union, even being in the National Observatory.

He became, 1984, first Brazilian to measure solar radiation in the Antarctic. He accomplished various voyages to the Antarctic continent by the Brazilian Antarctic Program - PROANTAR/SECIRM.



He helped to build observatories, planetariums and sundials, among them City Park (5.5 m height), in Brasília, with Oscar Niemeyer.



"MARCOMETA" AND "MARCOMEDIA"

Who did not know him, we can introduce him calling "Marcometa". He was firstly called out this way because during Halley Comet passage by Earth in 1980's, Marcomede catalyzed great interest by the astronomy.

He exited by Brazil encouraging sky observation sessions, publishing pamphlets and opening space so that lots of amateur astronomers went carried, with their telescopes, by small cities to show the sky for people's hundreds. In other words, he did so much bustle to announce the astronomy that the cartoonist Ziraldo nicknamed him of "Marcometa".



Illustration: Gerson Conforto.

He actively assisted museums creation: Astronomy and Similar Sciences (1985), through Memory and Divulging Group - GMD (1982); Science History Nucleus - NHC (1983) and Astronomy Memory and Similar Sciences Project, aiming create "Museum of the National Observatory"; and Eclipse (1999), in Sobral city (Ceará State).

He took part of the implantation of planetariums in Belém/Pará (1999) and Feira de Santana/Bahia. Moreover, accomplished astronomy projects inside schools Fernandes da Costa Domingos (ON Astronomer) and Sodré da Gama (Planetarium of Belém).

He was Science and Technology Analyst of National Observatory. He had vast experience at the research area of the Science and Technique History. He advised construction projects of observatories and planetariums.

Also he kept narrow contact with political to search of public recognition by work of scientific promotion accomplished by amateurs and volunteers.

Along his life received several Awards: Merit Tamandaré and Navy Friend (both Brazil Navy by performance diffusion work of Brazil in the Antarctic); Medal Tiradentes (ALERJ, 2007); Medal Pedro Ernesto (CMRJ, 2000); Medal Guimarães Rosa (ABRADE, 2009, by culture and environment) and Meritorious Commander by the Visconde Mauá Memorial Society (2009).

Latter on Comet passage, he proceeded being called "Marcomedia", because established connections with journalists and reporters, publishing in newspapers, magazines and TV. He traveled by Brazil supporting and encouraging the amateur associations and always was of arms opened at National Observatory (ON) to receive and to show the campus to all visitors.

Afterward this excitement and scientific divulging intense trace of Astronomy in media popped by country clubs of astronomers' amateur, telescopes and observatories.

Além disso, assinava várias colunas de ciências para jovens em jornais e revistas, dentre elas sobre Meteorologia e sua importância para as pessoas. Por tudo isso, seus Colegas o chamavam de "Marcomídia".



Scientific Awakening for Children



Photo: Basílo Fernandez.

Scientific promotion for children was in fact his passion. He did lectures at schools and marked visits to the National Observatory, where was scientific director and worked 42 years ago. It loved to carry Astronomy to the children running through Brazil infatuated.

He always was ravished with young people and children influx for sciences and happily mentions "By the curiosity is that is that are awoken by formation in the science".



Marcomede talking for students from Sacramentinas School at Knowledge Park Museum in Feira de Santana/BA. Photo: Basílo Fernandez.

His passion by astronomy carried him, early to the scientific divulging, starting to write regularly in the newspapers of larger Brazil's Circulation (*Jornal do Brasil*, *O Globo*, *Folha de São Paulo*) and in several magazines, as well as on radio and television, guiding, mostly the children.

He loved so much to do it that was very common to see him surrounded of children, explaining the Sun physics mysteries, or carrying them to visit the National Observatory, clarifying the hour preservation complicated mechanisms. At that time of Comet Halley (1986) made a guidebook contend excellent and beautiful storiottes (comic strip).

Extrovert, shaken and of simple manners, Marcomede was always at ease to talk about astronomy, valorize amateurs' determination and to encourage the associations creation and studies groups. He also was plastic artist and painted abstract pictures. Due his brilliant multiple activities he was known as Physicist, Professor, Amateur Astronomer, Painter, Writer, Divulger...

Marcomede was one of the first professional to announce Meteorology in our country. Moreover, he was collaborator of the Meteorology National Institute (INMET) in several occasions, inclusive to compose the 100 year history of INMET.

He owned more than 30 papers published between books and pamphlets of scientific promotion, besides charts and collaborations for magazines and newspapers. Author of the books: "Santos Dummont: Um Astrônomo Amador", "Uma Luz Diferente no Céu: O Cometa Halley", "A Pedra do Bendegó, que Veio do Céu" (1990) and "Antártica: Uma Viagem ao Topo do Mundo" (2005). He also had books texts published with Darcy Ribeiro and João Saldanha.

Marcomede died at the age of 59 leaving widow, three sons and lots of friends in the firmament. He was an example by his fabulous dedication to do arrive to children and young people Astronomy, Meteorology and valorization of our planet and nature.

This way, all the Brazilian science lovers feel the silence of a rare happiness and enthusiasm voice by Astronomy and Meteorology. That the stellar skies can hug and to welcome this formidable person, that always illuminated and announced our skies with great scientific atmosphere.

He lets us the challenge of continuing announcing and showing the Astronomy and Meteorology firmament for the all people.

UNEMET Team.

