

Vasil Persaud
(1935–2006)



MBBS (London-UCWI), DCP (London), MRCPath, MD (London), FCAP, FRCPath

Vasil Persaud, Professor of Pathology, died on March 10, 2006 at the age of 71 years. He spent 33 years in the Pathology Department at the Mona Campus of The University of the West Indies (UWI).

Vasil was born into a family of businessmen on the East coast of Guyana (formerly British Guiana on March 10 1935). His early education was at Queen's College, in Georgetown, Guyana. He started his medical education on the Mona Campus of The University College of the West Indies – now The University of the West Indies – in 1954 and graduated with MBBS (UCWI-London) degree in 1960.

Following his internship at Kingston Public Hospital, the love for Pathology brought him back to the Mona Campus to join the Pathology Department in 1962 as a registrar. Encouraged by Professor Brass and thirsting for postgraduate qualification, he went to the Royal Postgraduate School in London, England, on a World Health Organization (WHO) fellowship in 1964. He returned to the Mona Campus the following year with a Diploma in Clinical Pathology. On his return, he was appointed lecturer in Pathology. In 1968, he was awarded the Membership of the Royal College of Pathologists (MRCP). In that same year, he was promoted to senior lecturer. He acquired his MD (London) degree in 1972 on the basis of his thesis on "Incidence, Morphology

and Aetiology of Uterine Cervical Cancer in Jamaica". He was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists (FRCP) in 1980. Being an astute academician and researcher he was promoted to Reader in Pathology in 1975 and eventually elevated to a personal chair in Morbid Anatomy, later changed to Anatomical Pathology, in 1978. It was the first Chair awarded to a graduate of the UWI. He had published over 100 papers up to 1986; his main field of interest was gynaecological pathology. He was instrumental in starting the Cytopathology Unit in the Department and was coordinator for the initiation of the postgraduate Programme in Pathology and contributed immensely in training many pathologists who are now serving in the Caribbean.

Vasil not only had microscopic eyes but also editorial eyes. He was invited to join the Advisory Editorial Board of the West Indian Medical Journal in 1971. He served until 1975 when he was appointed Editor-in-Chief following his enthusiasm and vision to take the Journal to international standards. Acknowledging his achievements to the Journal, he later became Chairman of the Editorial Board, while still being Editor-in-Chief.

While he was such a brilliant editor, he was the first to admit that there was more work to be done to improve the image of the Journal. This he documented in an editorial column of the West Indian Medical Journal (1). He was a member of many local and international organizations including Jamaica Cancer Society, Jamaica Association of Scientists, International Academy of Pathology, Pathological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, to name a few. He also served as acting Vice-Dean and acting Dean of the Medical Faculty – now Faculty of Medical Sciences – when the occasion demanded it. He was also Head of the Department of Pathology from 1986–1992.

As a person, Vasil can be described as outspoken but polite. He was gentlemanly, scholarly and always had time for any one who needed his help. He was accessible equally to all academic, postgraduate, technological, clerical and ancillary staff. He worked late hours in his office but in his spare time, he loved to work in his garden. He was devoted and supportive of his family. He was blessed with two sons and two adopted daughters.

He will be remembered in the Department for his outstanding contribution, his leadership style, his quiet way of achieving results, his encouragement to younger residents and younger pathologists. We extend our sincere condolences to his beloved family.

REFERENCE

1. Persaud V. The West Indian Medical Journal. Past, present and future. West Indian Med J 1990; **39**: 1-3.

*Professor DJ Shah
Department of Pathology,
The University of the West Indies,
Kingston 7,
Jamaica.
Fax: (876) 977-1811,
e-mail: dipak.shah.uwimona.edu.jm*