

## Luiz Adelmo Lodi

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Luiz Adelmo was the son of Luiz Lodi and Anunciata Mora Lodi, Italians who came to Brazil with their parents in the mid-nineteenth century and found residence in the cities of Ouro Preto and Barbacena, respectively. Luiz Lodi (my grandfather) was born in the city of Crevalcore – Emilia Romagna Province. Anunciata Mora Lodi (my grandmother) was born in the city of Guastala – also in the Emilia Romagna Province. They first met in Barbacena-MG, where they got married in 1890.

Luiz Adelmo Lodi was born in the former Vila Rica on the March 23, 1894. The family then moved to Belo Horizonte in 1897, the year the new capital was founded. He attended basic education at the D. Helena Penna private school. There was no official basic education school at the time. He attended a course on Humanities at Ginásio Mineiro, in the state capital.

In March 1912 he enrolled for his freshman year in this School of Medicine, being shortly after appointed as an amanuensis (as clerks were then called) by the then director Professor Cícero Ferreira, who introduced him to Professor Borges da Costa, and the latter appointed him to the position of Descriptive Anatomy monitor. A few years later, he was a monitor in Medical Surgical Anatomy, whose chair was Professor Octaviano de Almeida. Octaviano was a notable surgeon, gifted with excellent general knowledge and great medical knowledge, and very kindly hearted. A rather picturesque event would happen by occasion of the practical-oral exams of his subject. Whenever he noticed a student was facing difficulties in the final exam, he would turn to my father, the monitor, and say, “Lodi, so-and-so needs your collaboration”. He disliked failing students.

By the 6th year he was an intern in Clinical Surgery, again under the Professor Borges da Costa’s guidance.

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**Figure 1** - Luiz Adelmo Lodi in his graduation ceremony.

In 1918, the middle of World War I, German submarines sank Brazilian ships on our Atlantic Coast. Brazil, then, declared war on Germany. At that time, French physician Professor George Dumas came to Brazil to assess the possibility of obtaining help from our country in the war effort in favor of the allies, France and Britain. Professor Dumas, an admirer of Brazilian medicine, suggested that Brazilian physicians be sent to France. The Brazilian Medical Mission was then formed with 90 physicians and 10 doctoral students from Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, and Rio Grande do Sul, under Professor Nabuco Gouveia from Rio de Janeiro. Luiz Adelmo Lodi, then a doctoral student, volunteered to compose the group from Minas Gerais under Professor Borges da Costa's guidance. Professor Renato Machado, Professor of Otorhinolaryngology, and physicians Manoel Taurino do Carmo, Salomão de Vasconcelos, Tavares de Lacerda, and Castro Silva were part of the Minas Medical Mission.



**Figure 2** - Menu of the feast offered to the members of the Medical Mission with compliments of some physicians.

The crossing to Europe was stormy and difficult, not only because of the constant threat of attack by enemy submarines, but also – and mainly – due to the Spanish flu that was spreading on board and affected several members of the Mission in more or less severe ways, and some were even killed by it. Borges da Costa, also suffering from the terrible flu, required intense care for several days. He did not lack, however, the moral comfort from the permanent aid of my father, who moved into Costa's chamber, thus endangering

his own life. Always by his side, my father was devoted, with the dedication of a nurse and the affection of a son. His master's health status was so severe that it was necessary to disembark him at Oran, in Algeria, so he could receive treatment under better conditions. My father temporarily aborted his participation in the Mission so as to stay with his friend. Once his master's health was reestablished, after 40 days of being sick, they were reintegrated, through another ship, to the Medical Mission in France, where they rendered relevant services in the treatment of those injured in the war as well as of those affected by the Spanish flu. Their friendly acquaintanceship was long lasting, until Borges da Costa passed away in September 1950.



**Figure 3** - Plaque currently fixed at the School of Medicine Memorial Center (Centro de Memória da Faculdade de Medicina) as a tribute to the members of Brazilian Medical Mission in World War I.



**Figure 4** - "Hôpital Brésilien" in Paris, where Brazilian physicians worked in 1918 during World War I.

Ever since I can remember, I keep vivid memories of Borges da Costa. Besides my closest relatives, he was one of the first people I met and with whom I established a relationship throughout my adult life. In my early childhood there were the pleasant visits to the former Instituto de Radium with my father every Sunday morning. There, he visited his sick patients, while I waited in the car. When the visit was over, he would come back with someone who, to my mind, was white-haired old man with always have a kind word for children. A fondness for pleasing children was a very characteristic trace of our dear friend's personality. That kindness was nestled in his heart. His spirit was always focused on doing good.

In 1920, my father applied for the position of substitute teacher of the section that included the chairs in Descriptive Anatomy and Surgical Medical Anatomy, Operations & Apparatus, presenting the theses "Study on the number and arrangement of goblet papillae in individuals of black and yellow races" and "On the circular suture technique for arteries", respectively.

For 15 years he was professor, alternately, of Anatomies and Surgical Pathology. In 1936 he began teaching the course on Surgical Propaedeutics, and onto Clinical Surgery II in 1946.

In 1947 he was elected vice-director of the School of Medicine, having on many occasions, temporarily substituted the director, Professor Alfredo Balena. By that time the academic journal PH7 was circulated in the School under the students' responsibility. That monthly publication issued an interesting article that highlighted the best qualities of each professor that would compose the ideal professor. Thus, Professor A's assiduity, Professor B's punctuality, Professor C's rhetoric, Professor D's enthusiasm, and Professor Lodi's linguistic elegance, followed by a list of the main merits of the each of the several masters. This public acknowledgment by the students melted my father's heart.

In December 1949, just a few days after the School of Medicine was federalized, Professor Alfredo Balena passed away. Luiz Adelmo Lodi, then the vice-director, took lawful and actual charge as director. He followed road filled with mishaps and obstacles for, at that moment, the unit was under the initial demand of adapting to the rigid precepts of the federal system for higher education. My father, however, saw this tough journey indeed as a high honor. Appreciated by his pairs during his term as acting director, he was effectively elected as director in December 1950 and re-elected in 1953 and 1956. During his productive,

decade-long management as the head of the educational institution, whenever a professor praised him for his work, Luiz Adelmo, with his Franciscan monk modesty, would firmly refute the encomiums he'd been granted saying that homage should actually be paid to his predecessor, the late Professor Balena, who knew how to – wisely, prudently and kindly – steer the boat, many times through a heavy sea, to a safe harbor, through a long period of scarce financial resources.

I recall, tenderly and emotively because present at the time, the expressions of unbridled joy by Borges da Costa and Samuel Libânio, founding masters of the School of Medicine, when they stated feeling deeply honored that a former student and disciple was director of the School. Both professors also stressed that the high investiture should be regarded as a fair and well-deserved distinction to he who, with resolution, perseverance, and enthusiasm, zealously and meritoriously worked for the federalization of the School. Accomplishments in the 1949-1959 tenure: building the School of Medicine's main building, including installation of basic chairs. Remodeling the Hospital São Geraldo and Hospital Carlos Chagas for the care of contagious diseases. Construction of the first blocks composing the Hospital das Clínicas and the School of Nursing. Signature of agreement with the Hospital da Cruz Vermelha for the creation of certain clinics. Agreement with the Rockefeller Foundation, the Conselho Nacional de Pesquisas and CAPES for improvements in medical education.

In 1959, at the University Council, he was elected Vice Chancellor, and took office in 1960, when the Chancellor was appointed Minister of Education. Luiz Adelmo had a great love of others (respect for his fellow citizens, care for his family and relatives, and dedication to patients). From 1922 to 1945 he was a surgeon at the former Instituto de Radium (currently Hospital Borges da Costa), the first hospital specialized in Cancer in Brazil. He was also the director of the Sanatório Belo Horizonte, a hospital specialized in the treatment of pulmonary diseases.

He also interested in business and acted as director of the Aliança de Minas Gerais Insurance Company and Companhia Ferro Brasileiro.

Luiz Adelmo was a strong willed man for whom obstacles and difficulties always were measurable and measured stimuli for new struggles and further conquests. There was no greed in his soul, but an extremely healthy philosophy of always facing and overcoming vicissitudes in life. His mind, constantly in

movement, would always activate the propelling gears of optimism. In his spirit, one would always find high goals pertaining to whatever was useful for the community. His existence was lived with intensity, and he followed the Christian credo of diligent optimism.

The flag of social welfare was vigorously waved, and unfurled without excesses and carried with true realism. To live the present and forget past sadness and sorrows. The future – which does not exist only for those lacking prudence – should be dutifully planned in a firmly established path to be followed, one from which eventual thorns and obstacles should be thoroughly removed.

Such a strong character was recovered in great tenderness, however. I remember very well an episode I witnessed some decades ago, which defines him well and shows the emotive, sensitive, and affectionate soul my father was. I was a freshman in the medical school and I attended one of his classes at the time, when he taught Surgical Propaedeutics. It was the time of a now extinguished tradition, when students thanked their professor for the lesson taught. My father, in response to the honor, stated that every beginning of term was a time of great emotion to him. That shows well the tenderness of a man who had been a professor for 35 years.

The spiritual were imbued Luiz Adelmo Lodi's character. Music, painting, sculpture, and architecture were especially fascinating to his mind. He often listened to classical music, especially opera, at home, with endless pleasure. He would do that for hours at end, always after careful and thorough study of the libretto.

According to Beethoven, "music is a revelation higher than all wisdom and philosophy".

In the baroque city of Ouro Preto, his homeland, he enjoyed the wonderful works of sculpture and architecture, especially the churches. In monumental Paris, which he visited a few times, he was enchanted by the architectural '*Regence*' style, so present in the "City of Lights". He felt sorry that the big cities in our country lacked uniformity in their buildings.

His intellectuality transcended artistic realities, and good literary, biographical, and general humanistic subjects brought great delight to his soul. He read the Brazilian and Portuguese classics in his youth. He kept himself up-to-date by reading the French magazines *L'Illustration* and *Paris-Match* and their American counterparts *Newsweek* and *Life*. Those periodicals, to which he subscribed for years, also collimated his incentive for his children to become well trained in foreign languages. His reading habits allied with gre-

at power of expression formed an aesthete of both the written and the spoken word. Skilled in foreign languages, he spoke Italian and French fluently, read English with ease, and also studied German.

His Christian religiosity and Catholic conscience were vividly demonstrated when the School held the enthronement of the statue of Christ by Archbishop Antonio dos Santos Cabral in November 1952, during his term as Director.

Sincerity of convictions, discretion in all deportment, clarity of thought, and resolve were characteristics he had as a person. Devoted son, exemplary husband and excellent father. He would help his children in their studies and in the transmission of the sacred precepts of the Christian moral.

He also had great capacity for work. He regarded work as the citizen's duty and a matter of personal achievement. For him work was an asset, a skill that can always be present, except when subdued by disease.

Civic spirit and patriotic sentiment he revealed early in his life, when he volunteered to compose the Brazilian Medical Mission in World War I.

My father, with his great heart, knew how to weave the threads of care, kindness, and affection when dealing with his patients.

Luiz Adelmo passed away in January 1979. A Jequitibá tree was then gone, a leafy crowned tree with deep roots, firmly attached to the ground, which did not bow down, but fell all at once. The Jequitibá kept itself erect, proud and overhanging to the end, though in his heart, for some time, the sap that nourished him flowed slowly and its vivifying matter dwindled. With its sturdy trunk, covered by an enormous crown, it always sought to provide shelter, defense and protection to the other trees in its beneficent shade.

The moment when the School celebrates a century of existence is a very fair and deserved moment to render special homage to its founding members. Inspired by noble ideals, physicians gifted with high civic conscience and high scientific, ethic, and cultural qualifications – guided by the prophetic spirit and the beneficent hand of Cícero Ferreira – sowed in March 1911 the good seed that germinated, grew big and fruitful, producing this beautiful fruit – the then called Belo Horizonte School of Medicine. That group of scholarly, fearless physicians faced difficulties of all sorts to establish the first educational institute of medical education in Minas Gerais. Their names are sculpted in brass, at entrance hall of the School, in an unfading demonstration of their singular work.

Aurélio Pires was the notable herald in the creation of this School of Medicine. That battling pharmacist, journalist and humanist possessed beautiful morals and intellectual predicates, whose modesty kept him from signing the inaugural minutes.

As years went by, some other professors entered the newly-founded institute of education, treading on the path of the founding members and imbued with that same high purpose. Their demeanor was always pertinacious and proud, having elevated ardor and unlimited devotion to this house. By the way, a quote by remarkable Carlos Chagas, when asked about how to make science: – “First with men, then with questions, and only

then with facilities and equipment”. Our School, for many years lacking material resources, is rich in human value and has always been prestigious in the national medical scenario. It has been turned – by the vast majority of its professors – into a high altar of medical ethics and moral, legitimate monstrosity of learning the beautiful science of Hippocrates and a venerable temple of dedicated and loving care to patients.

It is with great pride and immense joy that we have followed the scientific, cultural and physical construction of this grand work that is now the School of Medicine at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. A remarkable monument to medical science.