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## GIL VALDO JOSÉ DA SILVA (1954-2023)

### Chemist and oenophile with an adventurous soul!

In the small town of Guaimbê, located in the northwest of the state of São Paulo, the young Gil Valdo José da Silva had bigger ambitions than that small town could offer. He completed his early education in Guaimbê, before moving to São Paulo in 1970 to study at the Antártica Technical School, where he completed a degree in Industrial Chemistry. After completing the technical course, he did a ten-month internship at General Motors do Brasil, in São Caetano do Sul. As soon as he finished this internship, he was hired by the company to work as a process technician in one of the engineering departments. However, the routine of the job motivated him to take the entrance exam to study chemistry at the Chemistry Institute of the University of São Paulo (IQ-USP), where he entered in 1975. In order to stay in the city of São Paulo during his full-time undergraduate course, he taught chemistry in high schools, where he took a liking to teaching. He graduated in 1980 and then took a postgraduate course in organic synthesis of natural products at IQ-USP, under the guidance of the late Professor Nicola Petragnani. He defended his doctoral thesis in 1984 and soon afterwards left for Edmonton, Canada, to do a post-doctoral internship at the University of Alberta, under the supervision of Professor Derrick Clive.

He returned to Brazil at the end of 1986 and, in mid-1987, was hired as a lecturer in the Chemistry Department of the Ribeirão Preto School of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters (FFCLRP-University of São Paulo). In 1992, he returned to the University of Alberta, Canada, where he spent a year doing research on natural products in collaboration with Professor Derrick Clive. In the Chemistry Department at FFCLRP-USP, where he held various positions coordinating the undergraduate course, he actively participated in restructuring the course - including the way students were selected through the entrance exam - as well as publishing textbooks for undergraduate chemistry courses. He was also coordinator of the Chemistry Postgraduate Program on several occasions, contributing greatly to its development. In the administrative area, he headed the Chemistry Department for several terms (from 2002 to 2018).

In the area of research, as well as working mainly in the area of organic synthesis of natural products, he also showed a particular interest in modern Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) techniques, used in the study of the stereochemistry of organic compounds, an area in which he was a great expert,



Figure 1. Prof. Gil, at Braga, Portugal.

having been the main person responsible for the acquisition of the 300, 400 and 500 MHz NMR equipment of the Chemistry Department of FFCLRP-USP, as well as regularly offering several postgraduate courses on these modern NMR techniques and publishing dozens of scientific articles on the subject.

But that wasn't all that Professor Gil Valdo was about. He had an "adventurous soul", which is why he obtained a license as a single-engine pilot, then became interested in marine life and became a "Dive Master" with an international license,

having dived in various parts of Brazil, the Caribbean and Europe. In recent years, he has taken a particular interest in languages, studying French, Italian, Spanish and Japanese on a daily basis. He also ventured into functional cooking, developing recipes for gluten-free breads, and natural fermentation of various different foods and became a family producer of natural yogurt with different varieties of probiotics. He was a profound connoisseur and very afound of good wines, making a point of getting to know them in their planting and production, an interest that led him to learn about Argentinian, Chilean, Portuguese and Brazilian wine production. As a true oenophile, he also had plans to get to know French and Italian grapes.

After more than 30 years of uninterrupted work in the Chemistry Department at FFCLRP-USP, always driven by serenity and responsibility, he retired in December 2021, so that he could devote himself a little more to his travels, with the aim of getting to know other cultures and vineyards in various parts of the world, even after having visited dozens of countries.

Unfortunately, he passed away on July 21, 2023, at the age of 69, as a result of a heart attack. He left behind a wife, two children, brothers and stepchildren... as well as great nostalgia among the countless friends who had the good fortune to cross his path.

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