

## Claudette Hajaj Gonzalez (1936–2020)



On rainy October 30, 2020, the Brazilian Society of Medical Genetics and Genomics lost its founding partner, Dr. Claudette Hajaj Gonzalez, due to infectious complications.

Dr. Claudette, the fourth daughter of Jamil Hajaj and Soraia Nach Hajaj, was born on August 21 (and was registered on November 22) in 1936 in São Paulo. She graduated from the Faculdade de Medicina of the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) in 1961 and did a Medical Residency in Pediatrics for the next two years. Interested in neonatology, she started her career as an Assistant Physician at the Hospital das Clínicas of the same university. There, she observed with interest the babies born with congenital defects.

At this time, the first chromosomal diseases were described. Dr. Claudette, as a young pediatrician, then sought an internship in the Medical School's Cytogenetics Laboratory, and in the Departamento de Biologia of USP she obtained her PhD degree in 1973 under the supervision of Professor Pedro Henrique Saldanha, studying sex chromatin in newborns. Subsequently she went abroad and was a fellow for two years with Professor John Opitz in the United States (1975–1977).

Upon returning to Brazil, she implanted the Clinical Genetics Unit at the Instituto da Criança of USP,

where she stayed until 1989. Subsequently, she became an Associate Professor in the Departamento de Ortopedia, where she remained until the year 2000. From 2001 until 2006 she held the position of a Full Professor in the Instituto de Biociências, USP, where she then concluded her academic career. Even after she retired at the age of 70, she kept collaborating with the institute's Ethics Committee. Kind and generous, she contributed to the formation of several Brazilian geneticists.

Dr. Claudette has produced 82 articles in the Medical Genetics field, and among these, it is worth mentioning the article on the teratogenic effects of the drug Misoprostol, published in 1993.

Her professional history traces the path of Genetics in Brazil until it became established and consolidated as a medical specialty. She was the Treasurer of the Provisional Directorate of the Brazilian Society of Clinical Genetics (SBGM), when this society was founded in 1986.

Married, she leaves behind her husband, José Gonzalez, who has always been with us at the SBGM congresses, three children, and two grandchildren. She also leaves longing geneticist friends.

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