

It was in early 1995, I thought I would collect the biographical details of all past Presidents of NSI. There were two of them about whom I had no idea whatsoever. Prof. Menino de Souza and Dr. Griyllmayr. Later I came to know that Prof. N. H. Wadia was de Souza's assistant at JJ. Hospital, Bombay. All attempts to get more information about de Souza were in vain. A Bombayite told me in 1995 that Dr. de Souza was dead some decades ago!. That was the impression corroborated also by my senior colleagues in Bombay. But still during each visit to Bombay university examinations, I went on requesting all my friends there to get some information about him. I almost lost hope till my friend Prof. Sarosh Kathrak of JJ hospital gave me in Sept 1998 two obituaries of Dr. de Souza. To say the least I was shocked to know that he was very much alive during my early phases of search about him. Probably this would be the first time his biography is appearing in any of our publications. I give the entire credit of this paper to Dr. S. M. Kathrak of Bombay.

Dr. Menino de Souza was born on 6th July 1906 in Aldona (Goa). Unfortunately his father died early in his life and hence he was brought up by his mother. It was only by hard work alone he could come up well in life. After his high school education in Arpora he joined Xavier's college. He joined Grant Medical college for his medical education. He graduated in 1930. Later on he got his MD Medicine degree (from which college?) and became a teacher in medicine.

It was at that time he was sent to an year's training in Neurology at Queens Square, London after which he returned to Bombay. He did not want to confine his practice only to Neurology but kept two beds in JJ Hospital for Neurology. It was in this milieu Dr. N. H. Wadia joined to start a full fledged Neurology practice.

He could have kept N. H. Wadia waiting or made his life miserable. Instead that happy Goan went out of the way to help his assistant to establish Neurology as an independent speciality. He was a pucca academician and had already established himself as the best loved teacher in JJ Hospital. His hand book for the medical students was an instant success ("How to examine a patient". This book got reprinted six times by 1997) and his clinics were much sought after. The halo of respectability did not make him egoistic or uncivil to his students, juniors and patients. The Bombay medical scenario was not exactly ready for launching an exclusive speciality practice like Neurology though he knew fully well it would happen thus soon. It was his reason to help the energetic youngman Wadia to establish the Neurology in Bombay.

Menino de Souza was interested in many things other than clinical medicine. He was keenly interested in Catholic church which took quite a lot of his time. He was the president of the Catholic Students Union, Catholic Medical Guild of St. Luke, Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and St. John's Medical College, Eucharistic Congress and Cardinal Gracias Episcopal Jubilee etc. As a Catholic to the core he was loved by his Church and it honoured him in every possible manner. There is an auditorium in FBMEC named after him. The Medical Welfare trust has instituted an oration in his name. Pope Paul VI honoured by bestowing the knighthood of St. Gregory, the Great. Probably his involvement in the Church stole from him a lot of time. Not only the church but also civic duties also claimed a lot of his time. He was elected a municipal councilman and was elected chairman of the medical relief fund.

He was an excellent team player and he used to organise annual Medical ball in Bombay where he invited all the senior and junior doctors and lay men for a pleasant get together. He could play guitar and other string instruments, sing music and could enjoy life to the full. His college mate for MBBS days Dr. A. C. Durante Montario has written an obituary where he narrated how de Souza could enthuse every one to have good party times together.

He retired as Professor of Medicine in 1959 and later as Professor of Neurology in 1964. He again continued as Emeritus Professor of Neurology. He was equally interested in the administration as well and became the Dean of the faculty of Medicine in 1951 .

He was an excellent practitioner and his motto was "to help the less fortunate in every way he could and as long as he could" so much so that he continued to practice till 1991 upto the age of 87!. Even after he hung up his stethoscope, there were many old patients who used to call him up.

Perhaps in the midst of many activities he had very little time for academic or research work. I could gather only one paper published by him- the Presidential address of NSI titled "The Human Mind". There may be many others. Dr. K. S. Mani of Bangalore has kindly sent me a photostat copy of his Presidential address of NSI which I have included in this publication.

He died full of glory and achievements on 5th May 1996. His second daughter Dr. Stella Martins is a psychiatrist. His only son Dr. Mario de Souza inherited his practice. His daughter Anne is a versatile writer.

References

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