

Obituary

JOSE N RODRIGUEZ

MD; CPH (Hopkins); MPH (Hopkins)

(1897–1980)

Dr Jose N Rodriguez, internationally renowned and dedicated leprologist was born in San Marcelino, Zambales, Philippines, on 1 December 1897. He completed his Medical Course at the University of the Philippines in 1922, a Certificate of Public Health in 1932 and a Master in Public Health in 1948 from the Post Graduate School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University. He attended post-graduate courses in Tropical Medicine and Leprology at the Calcutta School of Medicine, and dermatology courses from Western Reserve University, Columbia University, USA, and Hospital St Louis, Paris, France.

His long, dedicated, and brilliant career in the field of leprosy control started soon after completing his medical course in 1922. He served the Philippines government in various capacities at the Culion Leper Colony and the Eversley Childs Sanitarium. He was the first Chief of the Central Luzon Sanitarium and the Division of Sanitaria (1951–56) and the first Director of the Bureau of Disease Control in 1957. He remained in this position up to his retirement on 1 December 1961.

Dr Rodriguez established a Leprosy Control Project in Cebu, Philippines, which eventually served as the framework of the National Leprosy Control Program in the Philippines. This leprosy control scheme became the model for other Asian countries where he had several times served as WHO Short-term Consultant to the governments of Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, Malaya and the British Solomon Island.

The competence and dynamic leadership of Dr Rodriguez can be attested by his numerous memberships in local and international scientific and medical societies, his official representation as Philippine delegate to international health and leprosy conferences, and various citations that were awarded to him during his career. Leprologists all over the world have recognized and respected his more than one hundred scientific articles published in various journals, which are considered classic in the field of leprosy and its control. In 1954, the government of Spain conferred on him the 'Orden Civil de Sanidad Con

Categoria de Encomienda Con Place'. He was also conferred Knight, Order of Hospitalier of the Holy St Sepulcre in Jerusalem. In 1974, he was the recipient of the much coveted Damien-Dutton Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions and life-long dedication to leprosy control.

Dr Jose N Rodriguez, clinician, epidemiologist, researcher, educator, and administrator died on 27 February 1980 at the age of 83 years. His death certainly leaves a void in the field of leprosy that will be very difficult to fill, particularly in the Philippines. However, his contributions in the field of leprosy and its control will long be remembered.

FERNANDO A JOSE, JR