



ANTONIO OSVALDO GÓMEZ HERNÁNDEZ
29 February 1928–25 December 1996

Osvaldo Gómez was born to a humble family in Jagüey Grande, Matanzas, Cuba, and from an early age showed great interest in the natural world. His distinguished career began as a teacher at his high school, "La Progresiva," in Cárdenas, where in the mid- to late 1950s he trained several generations in the study of zoology, botany, and mineralogy. At that time he participated in various expeditions to Península de Hicacos, north of Matanzas, which provided him with the opportunity to meet a number of well-known Cuban and foreign biologists. By then he had developed great interest in marine invertebrates, and crustaceans in particular.

Osvaldo obtained his degree ("Dr. en Ciencias Naturales") at the Faculty of Sciences, University of Havana, in 1964. With the opening in the 1960s of a national aquarium in Havana, he was called to be part of the professional staff, until the founding of the "Instituto de Oceanología de la Academia de Ciencias de Cuba" (now Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment). Throughout his professional career he eagerly received postgraduate training, mostly by international FAO and UNESCO experts, both in his home country and abroad. For this purpose he traveled in 1966 to the the Helsingør marine laboratory, in Denmark, to attend a specialized

course in benthos, taught by Prof. Dr. Gunar Thorson. During many studies of Cuban marine environments he served in collaborative teams with scientists from the USSR, Spain, Germany, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, and the United States. He was a teacher of nearly all generations of marine biologists of his time in Cuba, and was cofounder in 1970 of the "Centro de Investigaciones Marinas de La Universidad de La Habana," where he worked until his death.

Oswaldo's knowledge and experience contributed significantly to the development of museum research collections in Cuba. However, perhaps his most notable contribution was his influence in the formation of the first generation of Cuban experts in benthic communities, thanks to his zoobenthos courses and the motivation generated by his investigations on the western Cuban coast. He was considered one of the most prestigious Cuban carcinologists. Although he devoted much of his time to the study of decapods in general, he is particularly known for his publications on brachyuran crabs. In 1982 the University of Havana awarded him a doctoral degree ("Dr. en Ciencias Biológicas," equivalent to a Ph.D.), for which he prepared a thesis entitled "Los cangrejos de Cuba (Crustacea, Decapoda, Brachyura)," a voluminous compendium and illustrated guide including more than 300 species. Unfortunately that study was never published.

During his career, Oswaldo participated or directed numerous scientific expeditions in Cuban and adjacent waters concerned with faunistic surveys, benthic ecology, pollution, fouling organisms, or pharmacological products from marine animals. His deep knowledge of Cuban marine invertebrates, cordial and modest personality, and willingness to help were admired by all who had the privilege of knowing him. In his personal life, he was a model husband, father, and grandfather, as well as a great friend.

He died of a massive heart attack while on Christmas vacation with his family in Cárdenas, and will be sorely missed by friends and colleagues.—Manuel Ortiz and Rogelio Lalana Rueda, Centro de Investigaciones Marinas, Universidad de La Habana, La Habana, Cuba, and Rafael Lemaitre, Department of Invertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, U.S.A.

PUBLICATIONS ON CRUSTACEA BY
OSVALDO GÓMEZ

(Oswaldo apparently never used his first name, Antonio, and occasionally used his second last name, Hernández or its abbreviation, H.: in the following references his name appears as indicated in the publication).

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