



HENRY VON PRAHL  
(1948-1989)

Carcinology has not been immune to the violence experienced in Colombia due to the war on drugs. A bomb that exploded on a Colombian airliner flying from Bogotá to Cali, on 27 November 1989, killed Henry von Prahl at the early age of 41. Henry was born near Munich, Germany, 4 February 1948. His parents emigrated to Colombia in 1953, settling near the Caribbean coast where Henry was sent to a boarding school in Cartagena. At the early age of six, his father gave him a microscope which generated in him great curiosity. Henry's family later moved to Bogotá where he graduated from high school in 1968 at the Liceo Cervantes, and then entered the Universidad de Los Andes (UNIANDES) where he obtained his degree of Licenciado en Biología (B. Sc.) in 1974. Here he used his passion for nature to distinguish himself as a bril-

liant professional, and started his teaching career. He also met several German scientists of the then Instituto Colombo-Alemán de Investigaciones Marinas de Punta de Betín (Santa Marta) and began to apply his knowledge in microbiology and zoology to the marine environment. Henry was a keen observer, had an analytical mind, loved to write, and was an excellent artist.

Henry began his doctoral research on the subject of shrimp culture during the development of commercial shrimp culture operations on the Pacific coast. He spent three years at a government station near Guapi (Cauca), and became manager of the Compañía de Camarones Guapi, one of the first to produce pond-cultured shrimps in Colombia. During this time he explored the extensive estuaries and mangroves of the Pacific drainage of Colombia, and expressed

his wishes to work at the Universidad del Valle (UNIVALLE), Cali. In 1978, during a congress in Manizales, Henry met Carla Restrepo (Henry's love, although he never married) who was studying at UNIVALLE, and so provided him with the additional motivation to work at this University. His wishes became reality three years later.

He obtained a doctoral degree from the Universität Kassel, Germany, in 1980, obtaining a summa cum laude in his oral examinations. His dissertation was entitled "Zur Biologie der blauen Garnele *Penaeus (Litopenaeus) stylirostris* (Stimpson, 1879) und deren Zucht in Teichanlagen." Henry was professor of biology at UNIANDES, Bogotá (1978–1981), University of Wizenhausen, Germany (1979), and UNIVALLE, Cali (1982–1989). Although extreme difficulties are commonly encountered in practicing biology in the Latin American environment, he managed to publish more than 85 scientific papers, eight books, and 13 popular articles. These reflected his primary interest in crustaceans, particularly brachyuran crabs (he also published extensively on corals).

Henry played a paramount role, with the aid of his research, in the establishment of Gorgona Island and the Ensenada de Utría as national parks. He had a dynamic character and was involved in many activities such as oceanographic work, ecological surveys, aquaculture projects, and production of videos divulging the ecological importance of habitats on the Pacific coast. He was a man of great vision with many plans for the future, including publication of more books about the Colombian environment and the building of a marine laboratory on the Pacific coast where scientists could conduct their field research.

During his tenure at his beloved UNIVALLE, Henry was not only a tireless worker, but also served as an inspiration to others. His unusual capacity to investigate, his prolific scientific work, and his human qualities made him the favorite professor to direct research theses. Colombia and the carcinological community have lost a great scientist. Henry's writings and projects showed the strong love he professed for science. It is at least some consolation to know that most of his research was left for us to share in the form of publications. Perhaps

more important is that, as a result of his teaching, he left a school of thought in the form of capable students who, surely, will continue to carry on with his legacy. Henry left the world of the living, but his spirit and experiences will remain forever in our memories.—Gabriel E. Ramos, Facultad de Ciencias, Sección Biología Marina, Universidad del Valle, Apartado Aéreo 25360, Cali, Colombia, and Rafael Lemaitre, Smithsonian Oceanographic Sorting Center, National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC 20560.

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