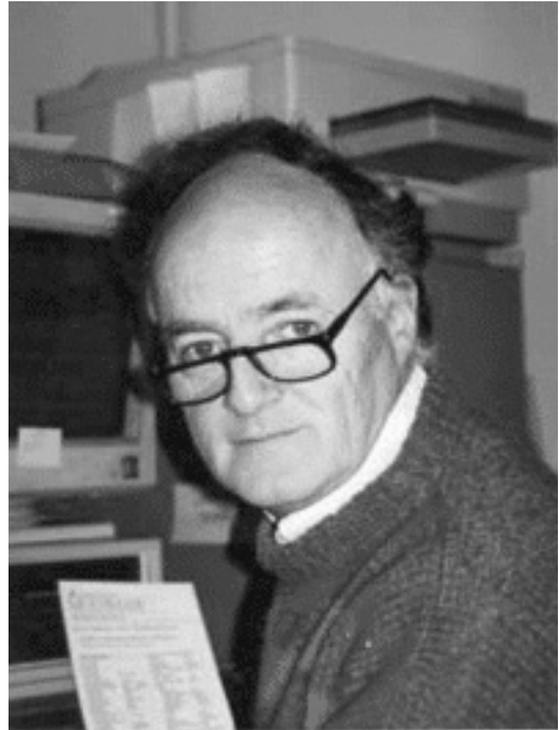


This issue of *Biological Research* (Biol Res) is dedicated to Eduardo Rojas. In preparation, I invited several of Eduardo's students and some of his colleagues who had collaborated with him in the past to submit a work for consideration in this commemorative issue. Some were reviews, while others were original contributions. Only active investigators were contacted. The instructions given to them were those of Biol Res plus a suggestion to include a short prologue in which they should relate how Eduardo influenced them professionally or what "Guayo" has meant to them in their lives. Only Bezanilla excused himself from this request; instead, in his review, he wrote a section called "working with Guayo."

I met Guayo in 1957 when I was coming back from MIT, where I obtained my Ph.D. in general physiology. I was supposed to teach part of the course of physiology given



From left to right: R. Latorre, E. Rojas, C. Hidalgo and F. Bezanilla, at Montemar, Chile.



Professor Eduardo (Guayo) Rojas.

to second-year students at the medical school at the University of Chile. Eduardo was one of my best pupils: extremely enthusiastic, very dedicated, critical, creative. He worked in my lab and published some papers with me. Once, he told me that he wanted to become a physiologist. As training in basic sciences (physics, physical chemistry, chemistry and mathematics) in Chilean medical schools in those days was extremely poor, I suggested that he immediately quit his medical studies. Following my advice, he studied basic sciences at the proper places and, finally, he obtained a degree in mathematics. Physiology, I advised him, you will learn in our seminars. So, he became an instructor in the Department of Biophysics of which I was the director. In this role, he was fundamental in the development of the laboratory of cell physiology at Montemar. We needed a regular supply of giant axons and the squids were offshore. We had to develop a procedure to bring axons to the laboratory in excellent physiological conditions and that meant that one of us had to live on the

coast. Eduardo wanted the job, and he did it excellently. At the end of 1961, Professor Julian Tobias from the University of Chicago visited our laboratory, and he was impressed with the insight that Eduardo had regarding the problems of the physiology of nerves and muscles. Accordingly, Tobias invited him to go to Chicago in order to obtain a Ph.D. Guayo accepted and obtained his degree in about two years.

Eduardo returned to a Montemar that was working smoothly; and here, between 1964 and 1973, he made his tremendous contribution to the physiology of excitability and of excitation-contraction coupling and became full professor at the Faculty of Sciences, University of Chile. A few months after the military coup (1973), he was ousted. In his exile (which lasted until 1994), he engaged in the field of electrophysiology of secretory cells (including chromaffin cells, b-cells, pituitary cells) and Alzheimer disease. Much of his work from this period is cited by the authors of the papers in this issue and so, I hope that the readers will become convinced of the quality and magnitude of Eduardo's contributions. Clearly, Guayo was an outstanding scientist. But, is this enough? What was he like as a person? To answer this question I invite you

to read the prologues by the different authors in this issue. In my case, the following anecdote suffices.

In Chile, the National Prize in Science (given every two years in the field of biology) is a highly valued recognition, one for which the different departments and universities compete strongly. In addition to prestige, the prize also entails a substantial monetary award. In 1996, I was nominated by the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Chile. In the same year, the Medical School of this same university, to which Guayo returned after his exile, chose him as its nominee because they thought his curriculum was good enough to easily win. The candidate must accept, but when Eduardo was consulted he simply refused on the grounds that he could not, and would not, compete with his mentor. This episode, confirmed to me by the Medical School authorities, is just one of numerous cases that demonstrate Guayo's generosity.

A tragic accident deprived us of part of the formidable intellect of Eduardo Rojas. We can only hope that he (and Illani, his wife) can live peacefully for the rest of their days.

MARIO LUXORO

Guest Editor



*Eduardo with A. Hodgkin, R. Keynes and a European researcher at Plymouth.*