

Obituary

ANTONIO CARLOS GARROS STORT 1939 - 2005



“The most gentle expert on aggressiveness I have ever known”, this is how I describe my best friend and almost brother “Stort”.

On February 12, 2005, all “bee experts and bee lovers” lost one of the worlds most gentle, easy-going and genuinely nice honey bee researchers, Professor Antonio Carlo Garros Stort. “Stort”, as he was fondly named by all who knew him personally, dedicated almost all his life to the study of the aggressiveness of Africanized bees, despite the fact that he was extremely allergic, and that the bees could end his life with only a few stings. He always had an anti-allergic medicine in his pocket, especially when he had to carry out aggressiveness tests with his bees. Professor Antonio Carlos Stort was born in Mogi Mirim, State of São Paulo, on December 19, 1939, son of Antonio Stort and Maria Helena Garros Stort. He is survived by his wife Professor Maria Neisa Silva Stort, a daughter, a dentist, Adriana Maria Stort, and two sons, chemical engineer Carlos Eduardo and materials engineer Vinicio José. Stort did his undergraduate studies in Mogi Mirim and graduated in 1961 as a biologist (Natural History Course) at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Rio Claro, today the Biosciences Institute of the University of the state of São Paulo (UNESP), in Rio Claro, São Paulo State. I met Stort for the first time in 1962 when he attended a Natural History Congress in Curitiba, Paraná state, as a graduate student of the bee geneticist Professor Warwick Estevam Kerr. At this meeting I

was also invited to work with Dr. Kerr and when I moved to Rio Claro, in 1963, I had the pleasure to share with Stort a room rented in a family home in that town; since then, our careers as bee geneticists and our friendship have kept us close during all these years. Stort was always a very calm, happy and discreet person, even in extreme situations. I remember that in December 1964, one month before I was to leave for a year in the USA, Stort simply disappeared for about a month from Rio Claro and nobody knew where he was, even I who lived with him. As I had to vacate the room in order to travel abroad, two days before my trip I called his parents and was surprised to find out that Stort was in São Paulo city, in a Hospital, recovering from heart surgery done by the then famous Dr. Zerbini. I visited him and he simply explained that knowing the high risk of the surgery (50% chance of survival) he decided to inform only his parents. I was shocked with such self control; however, I admired his calm manner to face such a serious problem; this made quite an impression on me. Two years after graduation (1963), Professor Stort was invited by another geneticist, Professor Ademar Freire Maia, to a permanent position to teach Introductory Biology to Pedagogy students at the Faculty of Philosophy, Science and Letters of Araraquara, São Paulo state, where he worked until 1978, when he was hired in Rio Claro as a Professor at the Institute of Biosciences - UNESP. In this Institute, he was chairman of the Department of Biology several times, member of the Congregation, Vice Director of the Faculty, etc., during his career, until his retirement in 1993 as Full Professor. Even then, he continued working as a visiting professor in São Carlos and was very active as researcher.

Early in his career, while Prof. Stort was teaching in Araraquara-SP, he was invited by Prof. Kerr to do his Ph.D. studies at the Bee Lab of the Genetics Department of the Medical Faculty of the University of São Paulo in Ribeirão Preto-SP, where he collaborated in numerous lab projects during the first years of existence of the Department. In this lab, under the direction of Prof. Kerr, Stort and I did all the experimental work of our doctoral theses on Africanized honey bees. He defended his thesis in 1972, with the title "Genetic study on the aggressiveness of *Apis mellifera*". In 1979, Stort presented his Associate Professor thesis, "Genetic study of morphological characters and their relation to the defensive behavior in honey bees of the genus *Apis*." He was the first to develop methods to study the aggressive behavior of the Africanized bees; these methods are used till today all over the world, and he was the first to describe the genes that control the aggressiveness of honey bees. In 1982, Prof. Stort reached the highest rank of his career, obtaining the title of Full Professor in Genetics at the Institute of Biosciences-UNESP in Rio Claro. During his career, Prof. Stort was an active member of several scientific societies, including SBG, SBPC, and UNESCO. He was a Researcher for CNPq and USDA and was member of the Academy of Sciences of the State of São Paulo. He trained numerous Masters and Ph.D students, and he had research grants from FAPESP, FUNDUNESP, CNPq, and FINEP. Stort received several prestigious homages during his career, including the Raphael Beiguelman award in genetics. Professor Stort also worked as adviser and scientific consultant, and as a specialist in bee genetics, in several countries in South and Central America, where he gave several international courses on bee genetics. He published about 180 scientific papers (articles in journals, proceedings of congresses, etc.) in national and international specialized journals (*Rev. Brasil. Biol*; *Rev. Brasil. Genet.*; *Ciência e Cultura*; *Euphytica*, *Ann. Rev Entomol.*; *J. Apic., Res.*; *J. Kansas Entomol. Soc.*, *Behavior Genetics*, etc.), He published 5 book chapters and 2 books and he was a world-renowned specialist on honey bee aggressiveness. I had the great pleasure to participate together with Professor Stort in almost all of his bee program

extension activities in national and international courses, congresses, consultancies, etc. This long time that I had contact with Stort, which includes more than 40 years of friendship and collaborative work, made him more a brother than a mere colleague for me. Based on everything I was able to observe about Antonio Carlos Garros Stort as a human being, I can testify that he was a tremendous example of humbleness, wisdom, honesty, a friend, a wonderful father and a great scientist, “the most gentle expert on aggressiveness I have ever known”.

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