

Graham: In Honor of Professor Graham Wright

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Someone has overseen the selling of the image of the British as cold, distanced and arrogant subjects, who look at you from the heights of their ivory tower. I do not know many Brits, but I can assure you that Graham Wright was the personification of the complete opposite of that cliché.

I met him at CECAM (Center for Cybernetics Applications to Medicine) and witnessed a conversation between him and our director, Esperanza O'Farrill. It caught my attention that his treatment of Esperanza was very familiar. I thought this was because they had known each other for several years due to Esperanza's active participation in the International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA). Graham had come to participate in the Congress of Health Informatics of the Informatics Convention in Havana and the next day I greeted him at the Palacio de las Convenciones. It turned out that he treated me, someone, unknown to him until the previous afternoon, with the same natural cordiality. Then he introduced my wife and I to his wife Helen and his lovely mother-in-law Pamela.



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At that time, the free software movement was booming, and Graham advocated its implementation in our country. On two occasions, Graham published in our journal, and this gives us a measure of his identification with the development of health informatics in our country. ^{(1), (2)}

Thanks to Graham's generosity, I saw Stonehenge and visited the grave of Florence Nightingale in England and Cape Town, South Africa.

After their successful careers in England, Graham and Helen, decided to move to work in South Africa, where he led a vibrant group of collaborators and advanced health informatics throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. I remember the work we presented in Bujumbura, Burundi, which he exhibited on behalf of the two of us. ⁽³⁾

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck, Graham organized a team of his collaborators and friends, and we published a paper on the possible evolution of the pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa. ⁽⁴⁾

Every year in December, Helen sent us a summary of how she and Graham had fared in the year ending. We knew that his health was not on his side, but Graham seemed to care little about that. His academic activity did not decrease, and lately, he was focused on writing about a subject that he was passionate about: health informatics in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Graham was far from a wealthy man. He was born in May 1947 into an English working-class family in Liverpool, and everything he achieved was the result of his work and effort. His generosity knew no limits and he always radiated enthusiasm and faith that all future times would be better.

According to the highly authoritative criteria of José Lezama Lima, the heat of Cuba has the peculiarity that it acts on the brains of both those of us who were born here and those who visit us and makes every visitor begin to think and behave as if they were a Cuban for all their life. It seems that this explains why our dear Graham held the status of a Cuban for all his life.

References

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