

Dr. Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino 1947-2010



Dr. Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino was born in Montevideo, Uruguay and passed away in Geneva, Switzerland on September 20, 2010. The constant energy and vitality she had for living and working inspired everyone in their daily lives.

Dr. Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino trained as a physician at the School of Medicine, Universidad de la República of Uruguay, completing her post-graduate studies in Clinical Toxicology and in Occupational Health. She undertook further medical training at the

Université de Paris, Lariboisière - St Louis (Hôpital Fernand Widal, Paris, France) and, through a Fulbright Scholarship, at the Medical Center in Houston, Texas. She was appointed Head Professor of Clinical Toxicology and Director of the National Poisons Centre in Montevideo.

In 1991, Dr. Pronczuk joined the World Health Organization (WHO) and worked actively promoting chemical safety, facilitating the establishment of poison centers, carrying out medical toxicology training throughout the developing world and publishing numerous authoritative articles and documents on toxicology. In 1999 she set up the WHO Task Force on the Protection of Children's Environmental Health; one major outcome of the Task Force was the global Healthy Environments for Children Alliance established at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 which brought together and enabled much work to protect the developing fetus and children from environmental hazards.

Dr. Pronczuk worked tirelessly to bring children's environmental health issues to foreground. After her retirement from WHO in June 2009, she continued her active support of the global children's environmental health movement.

In 2008 Dr. Pronczuk was recognized by the US Environmental Protection Agency as International Children's Environmental Health Champion for outstanding efforts and commitment to advancing children's environmental health issues around the world. In 2009 she received her fellowship in the Collegium Ramazzini and was awarded the International Society of Doctor for the Environment Recognition Award for her career and important achievements.

These paragraphs are a very short resume of Dr. Pronczuk's career and outstanding work. But Jenny was far away more than what is written in her professional bio. Simply listing a few of her successful achievements, her professional capacity or superb judgment is an inadequate tribute to the exceptional individual and professional she was.

Whoever had the opportunity and good fortune to contact Jenny or the privilege to work with her knows very well from personal experience that she left, in her very special way, a vital footprint on children's environmental health and chemical safety issues. The impact that she had as a human being and medical expert can be described as a brilliant comet trail that continues to guide us today.

Jenny was an indefatigable, passionate, charming person whose enthusiasm, knowledge and dedication engaged us all. She made all of us feel that we were important pieces in the global plan to make important changes, that we can and we must work together because this was the key for success. Her strength came from having the ability to touch people in a particular way – enabling their special abilities and transforming them into champions. She generously credited the success of important work to all contributors and shared the happiness of achievements and advancement, small and large, with everyone.

Amalia Laborde, another Ramazzini Fellow and colleague from Uruguay, described Jenny as a "teacher". True teachers are indeed very special individuals and this is one of the best descriptions of Jenny as a professional.

Jenny's lovely personality, proverbial elegance and famous charming smile were for everyone! Jenny opened the door to her friendship to all of us and, whenever she could, welcomed us to her warm home in Switzerland that she built with her husband Jorge Garbino and three sons Jorge Jr., Nicolas, Alejandro, far from Uruguay but full of Latin American charm. She and her family made us always feel as very welcomed special friends.

Dr. Pronczuk made an incomparable difference in this world, enjoyed her life and shared her light with us. We will never forget her and her example of how we can live our life. She was an extraordinary person, she was our dear friend and colleague who will continue to contribute and guide us through our special memories of her.

Lilian Corra, Judy Stober
Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino's
friends and colleagues