

History of an Irresistible Vocation

Augusto H. Álvarez —architect, friend and teacher— leaves all those who were blessed to know him the great example of a fruitful and creative life. We are also left with the memory of a simple life, true to itself, led by an incomparable human being.

Many of us received as a divine gift his guidance and teachings about how to be true Mexicans.

Augusto was, on principle, ordered and measured in all things, particularly in his central vocation in life: architecture.

There are innumerable examples of his work throughout the country. Dedication, effort and affection were always the centerpieces of any work he was commissioned to do.

It was not, however, only his work as an architect which distinguished him, but also his work in teaching and administration, as well as the friendship he offered everyone, starting with his schoolmates, all the way through his young disciples and collaborators until the end of his life.

He taught composition in the National School of Architecture and later founded the School of Architecture of the Iberoamericana University, where he was influential in orienting the learning process toward a global education for architects.

Álvarez's teachings and work were always consistent and his vocation clear; he always conceived of projected spaces as a whole in which the architect could conceive of and integrate all the elements which make up architecture, using the spaces for the ends for which they were created without exhibitionism and always upholding, with great elegance, quality of thought, in word and deed.

But above all, his truth, values, openheartedness and great friendship captivated all of us who had the good fortune to know and deal with this teacher and friend in the workshop, in his office and in any sort of professional collaboration on a day-to-day basis, which he did with so many architects from Mexico and abroad.

No one should doubt that among all these virtues there was any lack of spontaneous joy in his pleasant, often funny, remarks, charged with healthy irony, particularly when he was criticizing himself.

Augusto's full life could be seen in the meticulous care he took in preparing trips all over the world to capture the sense of human life. He always made these trips in the company of friends who shared his ability to analyze and observe, and of course, always carrying a camera, a small notebook and a well-sharpened pencil poised to express his fertile imagination.

All this made him the true representative of our School of Architecture which has borne many fruits for our country. I am sure I speak for all those he distinguished with his friendship, teachings and affection.

José Adolfo Wiechers Escandón
January 1996.