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DR. PEDRO VILLEGAS-NARVAEZ

### *About the cover*

#### **DR. PEDRO VILLEGAS-NARVAEZ (1943)**

Dr. Pedro Villegas was born on December 2, 1943, in Libano, a small coffee growing town in the state of Tolima in Colombia, where his parents kept hens and a cow that sparked a life-long interest in veterinary medicine. After graduating from high school in 1962, Pedro matriculated at the College of Veterinary Medicine of the *Universidad de Tolima* in the provincial capital of Ibagué. During his years at the College, he worked as a student assistant performing necropsies on chickens, foreshadowing his future career. Dr. Villegas joined the Colombian Agricultural Institute (*Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario* or ICA) after receiving his DVM degree in 1967. He worked under the direction of Dr. Theodore Vera who encouraged Pedro to pursue graduate work at Texas A&M University, where he was later accepted for graduate studies and received his MSc degree in 1971. In 1969, while a student at Texas A&M, Pedro married Angela Cataño who he had met at ICA. Their marriage was blessed with two sons and one daughter.

After returning to Colombia from Texas A&M, Dr. Caswell Eidson encouraged Pedro to apply to the PhD program at the University of Georgia in Athens. Dr. Villegas started his PhD program in the fall of 1972, focusing on aerosol vaccination against Newcastle disease under the direction of Dr. Stanley Kleven. Upon graduating in 1975, the Villegas family returned once more to Colombia where Pedro worked again at ICA as the Director of Veterinary Microbiology. Two years later the family returned to Athens, where Pedro was appointed as an Assistant Professor at UGA's Poultry Diagnostic & Research Center (PDRC).

During his tenure at PDRC, Dr. Villegas worked mostly on viral diseases and published approximately one hundred peer-reviewed papers on different avian viruses including Newcastle disease. Together with Dr. John Glisson, Pedro developed a new vaccine for Newcastle disease - the Villegas-Glisson-Georgia vaccine better known as the VG/GA vaccine. He retired as a full professor in 2011 and continued as Professor Emeritus.

Dr. Villegas is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Microbiology and charter member of the American College of Poultry Veterinarians. His contributions to the veterinary profession include co-founder and editor of *Avicultura Profesional*, a quarterly trade publication edited in Spanish with wide circulation in Latin America.

Starting in 1983, Dr. Villegas founded a series of simultaneously translated International Seminars in Poultry Pathology and Production held every four years in partnership with UGA and the Colombian Veterinary Poultry Association (AMEVEA). The seminars known as "Pedro's Seminars" were attended by more than 300 veterinarians from Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries. Starting in 1990, Pedro also initiated the Latin Dinner held during the AAAP annual meeting.

Dr. Villegas was inducted in the Hall of Honor of the World Veterinary Poultry Association in 2013 and the AAAP Hall of Honor in 2017. He was awarded AAAP's Special Service Award (2003), Poultry Research Award (2007), and Lasher-Bottorf Award (2010). He holds honorary degrees from the *Universidad de Tolima*, the *Universidad Complutense de Madrid*, and *Universidad Mayor de San Marcos* in Lima. He has made approximately three hundred presentations in fifty different countries.

Submitted by K.A. Schat with Pati Villegas