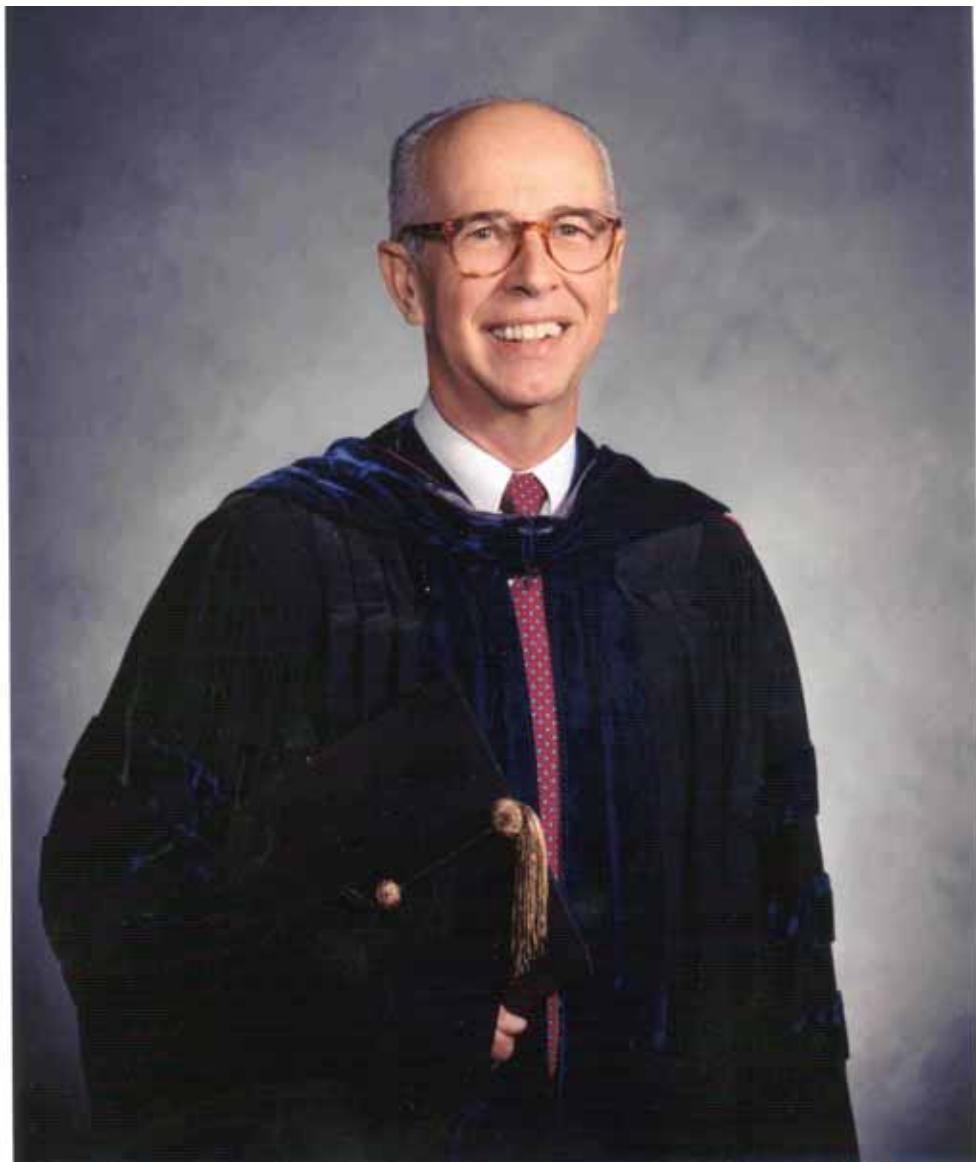


## **My Life Story**



**Dr. Jorge L. Padron**



**Gale Boutwell, Storykeeper**

## **Acknowledgement**

As we near the consummation of the Ethnic Life Stories Project, there is a flood of memories going back to the concept of the endeavor. The awareness was there that the project would lead to golden treasures. But I never imagined the treasures would overflow the storehouse. With every Story Teller, every Story Keeper, every visionary, every contributor, every reader, the influence and impact of the project has multiplied in riches. The growth continues to spill onward. As its outreach progresses, "boundaries" will continue to move forward into the lives of countless witnesses.

Very few of us are "Native Americans." People from around the world, who came seeking freedom and a new life for themselves and their families, have built up our country and communities. We are all individuals, the product of both our genetic makeup and our environment. We are indeed a nation of diversity.

Many of us are far removed from our ancestors who left behind the familiar to learn a new language, new customs, new political and social relationships. We take our status as Americans for granted. We sometimes forget to welcome the newcomer. We bypass the opportunity to ask about their origins and their own journey of courage.

But, wouldn't it be sad if we all spoke the same language, ate the same food, and there was no cultural diversity.

This project has left me with a tremendous debt of gratitude for so many. The almost overwhelming task the Story Keeper has, and the many hours of work and frustration to bring forth a story to be printed. I salute you.

To the Story Tellers, thank you for letting us share in your heart and soul. It is my prayer that some or many of the stories will influence many young persons to another level, to be enmeshed in the pursuit of learning of other cultures that make up our community and the world.

This has, indeed, been a project of "Many" for the Community. Thanks to the following who have played a role in helping to achieve the goal. The list is practically endless, first names only. You know who you are and what you did . . . sincere thanks to each of you:

Caroline, Charity, Charlotte, Bob, Dana, De Ann, Ed, Eric, Erman, Jim, Joha Oke, John K, John M, June, Kay, Kendall, Maria, Mark, Michelle, Myra, Norma, Pat, Rachel, Rob, Starr, Susan, Valerie, and special recognition to Jim Coombs, SMSU, Map Department.

Jim Mauldin  
Coordinator  
Ethnic Life Stories  
'01 '02 '03

**The Ethnic Life Stories Project....**

*...giving the Springfield community a window to its diversity through the life stories of ethnic elders.*

Liewe Se Storie Afrikaanse

Afrikaanse (2)

ŌSŌ GAY HÄY Wō TAN

Apache

قصص من الحياة

Arabic (2)

Ga-no-du Ka-ne-he-lv-s-gi

Cherokee

自傳

Chinese (2)

Life Stories

English (5)

Histoires De Ma Vie

French (2)

Lebensgeschichten

German

סִפּוּר חַיִם

Hebrew

Mayer rah-Khaan Knee-Hindi

Hindi

生きてきた道

Japanese

나의 살아온 이야기

Korean

DZIVES STĀSTS

Latvian

ജീവിത കമക്കൾ

Malayalam

OPOWIESC zŻYCIA

Polish

Imanawangtan Wawanaycasjas

Quechua

Povestea Vie Ții Mele

Romanian

Жизнѣнныя испорій

Russian

Historia De La Vida

Spanish (8)

សំរាប់ពី មិន

Thai

Kuwento Ng Aking Buhay

Tagalog

CHUY-N [©] Tj

Vietnamese

געשיהטע פון מאין לעבען

Yiddish

# Birthplaces of the Storytellers

2001 2002 2003

Yohannan Abraham  
Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India

Janet Akaike - Toste  
Kofu, Japan

Tony Albuquerque  
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Martha Baker  
San Antonio, Texas

Grace Ballenger  
Shanghai, China

Ruth L.V. Burgess  
Poona (Pune), India

Sara Fajardo Calderon  
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Olga Codutti  
Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina

Claudine Arend Cox  
Boulay, France

Adalyn Cravens  
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

Taj Farouki  
Wadi-Hunayn, Palestine

Malca Flasterstein  
Holon, Israel

Edgar Galinanes  
Mayaguez, Puerto Rico

Reynaldo Gumucio  
Cochabamba, Bolivia

John Hernandez  
San Antonio, Texas

Yung Hwang  
Okjung, Kyungnam, Korea

Madge (Jackie) King  
London, England

Edward P. Ksara  
Tangier, Morocco

Hyman Lotven  
Kapulah, Russia

Regina Lotven  
Nancy, France

Sterling Macer  
Mason City, Iowa

Gwendolyn Marshall  
Jackson, Mississippi

Maria Michalczyk-Lillich  
Sandomierz, Poland

Edith F.L. Middleton  
Glasgow, Scotland

Loan Vu Nigh  
Thai Binh, Vietnam

Jorge Padron  
Pedro Betancourt-Matanza, Cuba

Ruth Penaherrera-Norton  
Archidona, Ecuador

Eric Pervunkhin  
Moscow, Russia

Ioana Popescu  
Bucharest, Romania

Josefina S. Raborar  
Manila, Philippines

Juan Salazar  
Tuman, Peru

Eligio Sanchez  
Mexico City, Mexico

Tong Trithara  
Audhaya, Thailand

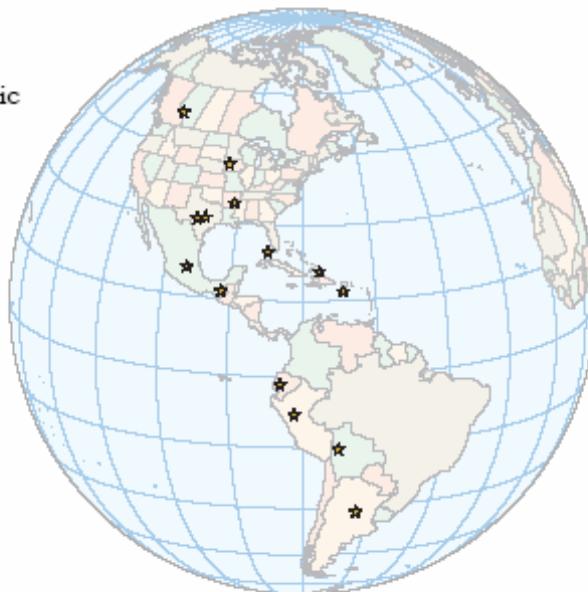
Cyril Vermooten  
Beaufort West, South Africa

Joy Vermooten  
Nqaberrie (Natal), South Africa

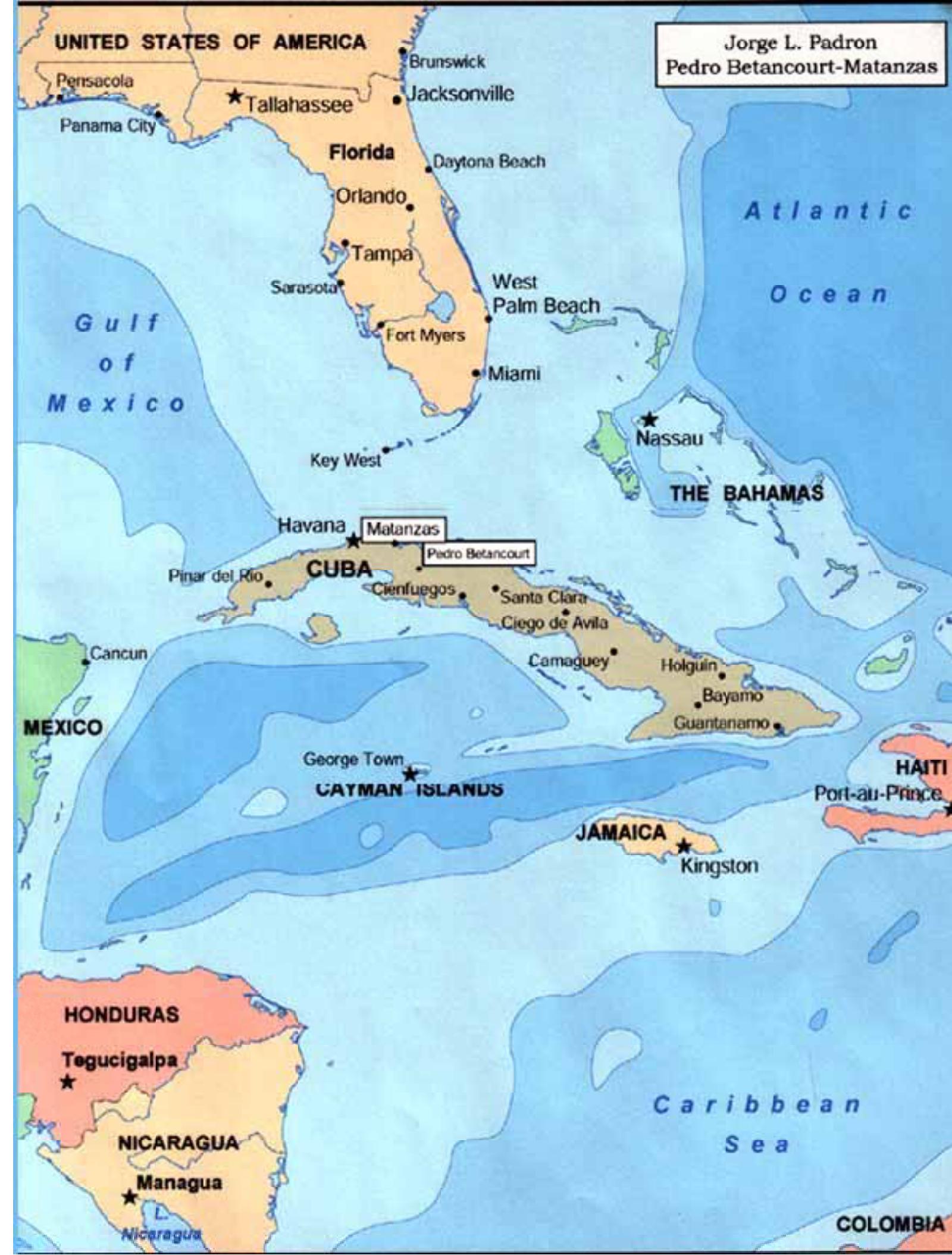
Ilga Vise  
Riga, Latvia

Hiltrud M. Webber  
Domnau, Germany

Tobby Yen  
Chung (Zhongshan), China



Jorge L. Padron  
Pedro Betancourt-Matanzas



## **DEDICATION**

My thanks, gratitude and praises to Jim Mauldin who made this project of ethnic biographies a reality. You are an exceptional person with clear goals and selfless commitment to people whose contributions to the American society are greatly underestimated.

To my wife of many decades who convinced me to pursue this project because she believes in my worthiness more than I do. She saw the value of passing my heritage to my children and grandchildren.

My heartfelt appreciation to Gale who was, in my mind, the only natural to do this difficult task. She has done it in a way that surpasses “well done”. It is beautifully written and truly reflects my life.

Many thanks to Barbara Wing, my close university friend, who sat patiently to reinforce many important events in my professional life.

My deepest gratitude to Drury University that made my life and career possible with complete fulfillment and happiness,

Last and not least to my three children and five grandchildren for whom I have done this project because I love them so deeply.

## CONTENTS

### PREFACE

Chapter 1: <b>FAMILY HISTORY</b> .....	1
Chapter 2: <b>EARLIEST MEMORIES AND CHILDHOOD</b> .....	5
Chapter 3: <b>THE TEEN YEARS</b> .....	9
Chapter 4: <b>ADULTHOOD</b> .....	11
Chapter 5: <b>LIFE MISSION</b> .....	33
Chapter 6: <b>LATER YEARS</b> .....	35
Chapter 7: <b>SPRINGFIELD EXPERIENCE</b> .....	39
Appendix 1: Academic and Administrative Appointments.....	41
Appendix 2: Professional and Honorary Organizations, Honors and Special Government Assignments .....	42
Appendix 3: Publications.....	43
Appendix 4: Credits from Colleagues and Family .....	45

**Dr. Jorge Luis Padron**

**La Historia de mi vida**  
The Story of My Life

**PREFACE**

Coming to the United States as a college student, marrying in Oklahoma, raising our family in Springfield, Missouri, and giving 43 years of my life to research and teaching in an American University, I am happily as American as my wife, children and grandchildren. But I am also proud of the heritage given me by my Cuban family. Small accents of the Spanish language remain in my speech and I revere the memory of my mother and father in our Cuban home. It speaks well of my parents, brother, sister and other relatives, that they were able to meet enormous challenges and changes when political circumstances forced them to leave Cuba and successfully rebuild their lives in the United States.

Since 1959, Cuba has been under Communist rule. I will not visit Cuba until and unless Castro is no longer in power and Cuba is free. I know that under the shadow of Communism, Cuba's spirit and vibrance have changed. Advances in education, development and artistic expression, and even the natural resources of this beautiful land, have been diminished and fallen away. The Cuba of my childhood was very different. I hope to portray some part of it through my family's history and my life story.

**A West Indies Island in Turmoil**

Cuba is a beautiful tropical island in the Caribbean Sea. Only 92 miles of open water from Key West, Florida, there is a relatively easy route of access between Cuba and the United States. Most of the island, which is roughly the same size as the state of Tennessee, is a rolling limestone plain with widely separated mountain ranges. Luxurious royal palms cover the island. The average annual temperature is 75 degrees, so there is a year-round frost-free growing season. Everything about the island is desirable in terms of climate and terrain and the island is rich in natural and mineral resources.

Politically, Cuba has an unfortunate history of trouble. The United States actually freed Cuba from Spain in December of 1898 and held a military occupation in Cuba until the Republic of Cuba was established in 1902. Through the Platt Amendment, the United States held the right to intervene in Cuban affairs until 1934 when the amendment was abolished and Cuba was left to its own resources and reserves. In 1933, Fulgencio Batista, the idealistic stenographer for the army led a "sergeant's revolt" that replaced the government which had been headed by the erratic leader Gerardo Machado. Batista remained near the center of power and was elected president of Cuba in 1940.

Constitutionally unable to run for a second term, he was replaced in the 1944 election by a member of the opposing Auténticos political party. Unlike ex-presidents in America who are guarded and protected, a deposed Cuban leader is a political misfit in his own country. Batista went into exile in Florida and waited 6 years for the political change of tide which brought him back to power. With the help of his Democratic party and supporters, he moved to the head of government a second time in 1952. This time, he suspended the constitution and made himself chief of state. Although social advances were made during this period of time, particularly in the area of public education and literacy, Batista's dictatorship grew unpopular and there were stories of corruption and terrorism associated with his power. After 7 years of Batista's rule, the political ground was fertile again for revolt and the revolt took shape under the leadership of Fidel Castro and his bearded "Fidelistas". Batista fled Cuba on Jan. 1, 1959 and a week later, Fidel Castro became premier.

In spite of U.S. hopes to the contrary, it quickly became evident that Castro's new regime was Communist controlled. All foreign owned property was nationalized, as well as all major Cuban owned companies. Newspapers were suppressed. A new minister of industry was charged with the reindustrialization of Cuba. Castro began to build an army ten times larger than Batista's, justifying the military increase with his radical warnings that the United States was planning to invade the island. Life as it had been in Cuba was out of control and out of control of its people.

By the thousands, Cuban citizens became refugees. Among them were my parents and many members of our family. Life in Cuba, as a communist ruled country, was no longer possible. The Padron family's long and close association with Batista, his government and his family, made it even more threatening to remain in Havana and there was only one choice—to make a new home in a new country. Fortunately, the United States was friendly, somewhat familiar and only 92 miles away.

## CHAPTER 1: FAMILY HISTORY

My name is Jorge Luis Padron. I was born in Matanzas, Cuba on March 7, 1931. My parents had a love story. I know exactly how they met. The young men in the province of Matanzas went to church to look for girls. The young ladies sat in the pews and the young gentlemen stood in the back. As the girls either came into or left the church, the young men could see them. Of course, each girl's head was covered with the traditional mantilla, but this did not prevent young men and women from making eye contact if they wanted to. My mother and father met in just that way. Mother was 15 years old and my father was 18, and their families were in similar circumstance. Both of their fathers had died in the flu epidemic of 1918. Once comfortably supported by strong and able fathers, both families had been emotionally and financially affected by the loss of the father. The typical Cuban woman of that era would have been trained in household skills and culture, but not in ways to earn money. A family that lost a father could suddenly become very poor. Both my mother and father went to work at age 15 to help support their families. My father worked in a bank and my mother worked for the government. On the day they met in church, they set a course for the rest of their lives. My mother always said she chose my father from the beginning and never looked at any other man. My parents were married six years after they met. When my father, Dr. Adriano Padron, finished his veterinary training, he was able to support a family. My mother, Amelia Maria Sardiñas Padron, was 21 when she quit her job to become a wife and mother.

I was my parents' third son. My oldest brother, Adriano ("Bebo"), was 6 when I was born, and Carlos was 4. My mother was attended at my birth by a midwife who came to our home. As was often the case in a middle class Cuban family, my mother made arrangements for someone from the town to breastfeed me. Eleven months after my birth, the family grew again with the arrival of our only sister, Olga.

When I was two years old, our family moved from Matanzas to Havana, the capitol city. My father was selected to be the head of the National Veterinary Service. Like a number of young professionals, he was selected to replace an important officer of the former government. His government appointment provided a home for us in the midst of a large military camp. Like the other officers' homes, our stucco house was painted white. It was rectangular with four bedrooms. The windows were protected by green wooden shutters that could be closed against the beating of a tropical storm or even a hurricane, such as the particularly frightening one I remember in 1944.

Our home was so near the water that we could hear the constant sound of the ocean and feel its cooling breeze. I have sincerely missed living near the ocean. I remember the smell of the sea, and also the excitement of seaport activity. The island of Cuba, with its approximate 2300 miles of coastline is intrinsically connected to the sea. In spite of hair-raising stories of tidal waves that swallowed entire villages and storms that capsized fishing boats, I was a child who dreamed of becoming an officer in the merchant marine. For many years, Havana was one of the world's most prestigious and attractive tourist destinations and cruise liners frequently brought tourists to the harbor. I recall people on

big boats throwing coins to Cuban children who were diving in the harbor. It appeared that the children were in need of money. I felt sorry for the children and began to realize that not all families had the same opportunities, lived by the same rules or had the same expectations. I knew that my family was fortunate in that we seemed to have everything we needed.

Our comfortable family life was enriched by the climate and the year-round availability of delicious tropical fruit which grew all around us. There was also a richness among the personalities of the members of our household. Everyone seemed to view the permanent residence of two widowed grandmothers and an uncle as completely natural and there was no trouble in the household related to their living in the house; in fact it was just the opposite. Everyday, my mother went about her household activities singing romantic songs and seeing to the interests of a large family. She was beautiful and very loving. She was generous and especially attentive to the needs and thoughts of her children. She wanted to know what we were thinking about and she took an interest in our selection of friends.



My mother, Amelia Maria Sardiñas Padron  
In Cuba, 1938



My father, Dr. Adriano Padron  
In Cuba, 1938

The household was both peaceful and structured in its daily routines. No one in the house, including the cook and household servants, questioned the fact that my father was the absolute boss of the house. (The name Padron actually means “big father” or “master.”) He was an equestrian and a sportsman, a stately and serious man with high expectations of himself and his children. Eventually, he developed opinions and views as to the careers that each of his children should choose. His strongest values and greatest

hopes for us were related to our pursuit of education and making a success of our lives through our careers. He was a scientist at heart, always making use of his university training. Even though he kept hunting dogs and knew how to play tennis and polo, my thought in childhood was that he was always working.

His acquisition of an important pharmaceutical firm in 1939 was an opportunity created by world events. World War II was underway and Germans everywhere on the continent were suspect. Many German owned companies in Cuba were nationalized including the Shering Pharmaceutical Company. Rather than letting a successful business be dismantled, my father was able to step in and keep it operational. The pharmaceutical house produced and sold necessary vaccines, cough syrup, etc. My father's relationship with Batista and his position as an army officer made it possible for him to acquire and operate the company as a private enterprise while he also continued to serve the government. When my brothers and I were old enough, working at the company provided summertime opportunities for earning spending money.

My father actually left the family in Havana on two occasions (1938 and 1944) to study in the United States for rather long periods of time. On assignment for the Cuban government, he studied bacteriology, vaccines and serums both in Baltimore and at the Rockefeller Institute in New York. Through this postdoctoral study in the United States he learned a great deal that benefited the practice of medicine in Cuba. As example, penicillin was not available and had not been used in Cuba until my father began to experiment with injections of the penicillin "juice" – meaning the filtered culture in which the penicillin was grown. A woman who would have died without penicillin was the first of many to benefit from my father's early use of the drug in its unpurified form. Later the culture was purified and the use of penicillin became standard.

It is ironic, perhaps, that there was no penicillin at the time it was needed for me. At age seven I was stricken with appendicitis and had an emergency appendectomy. The lack of antibiotics at that time made this a particularly dangerous surgery. There was a high rate of death associated with infection of the intestine. Appendicitis, itself an infection, and surgical intervention with high probability of inflammation to follow, could have been life threatening. I was fortunate, and recovered without complications.

My father's study of antibiotics and vaccines reflected his innate interest in science. The extremely high importance that he placed on education may explain why no routine household chores were assigned to the children. Our job was to learn and to be good students. Academics came easy to me. Bebo, Olga and I were generally in favor with our father as we were all very good students. Carlos, on the other hand, was frequently in trouble for bringing home only average grades. Carlos was, and is, a brilliant artist. He loved to paint and draw and he concocted armies of handmade soldiers and policemen for me. Using cardboard, homemade paste, his scissors, pencils and paints, he made beautiful figures that both developed and revealed the extent of his talent. My father believed that Carlos should become an accountant and although he never laid an angry hand on any of his four children, he punished Carlos' poor grades by not allowing him to participate in sports practice. This particular punishment was very difficult because our

involvement in sports was extremely important to all of us. We all played baseball and tennis and we loved swimming. It was sad for Carlos to be unable to practice baseball and to be kept from the activities that were the most enjoyable. I felt very sorry for Carlos. This was also difficult for our sister, Olga, who was full of fun and energy and has always been known for her engaging and compassionate personality as well as her intelligence. Of course, Carlos eventually became nationally recognized in baseball and a very successful accountant and hospital administrator. This experience taught me that true motivation to learn is not achieved through punishment and that different people think in different ways.

## CHAPTER 2: EARLIEST MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD

Daily life at home was pleasant for all of us. The day always began with breakfast of bread and butter, café latte and oatmeal. Our babysitter -- more like a governess except that she did not live in our house -- walked us to our elementary school and returned for us seven hours later at the end of the typical school day. After school there was "merienda", a refreshment time at home not unlike the British custom of afternoon tea. We always looked forward to a light sweet and milk. Immediately after merienda, we bathed and did our homework. The family dinner was served at 8 p.m. with everyone present.



Our comfortable home in Havana was surrounded by mango and avocado trees and was very near the ocean.

Estela, our live-in cook for many years, offered soup as a first course to every dinner. That may explain why, to this day, I love soup and am pleased to have it. Estela couldn't read or write, so unfortunately there are no written recipes for her soups or traditional dishes of roast pork, pasta, yema creams. She cooked in the way she had been taught, without the aid of written instructions or lists of ingredients. Most of the time, the meals she made were very pleasing. Estela had a special technique for deboning a whole turkey and on special occasions she would roast a completely deboned bird in such a way that it still appeared to be a full-size turkey. How she did that remains somewhat of a mystery.

Conversation about the day's events took place through dinner and until bedtime which was at 10 p.m. Although I shared a room with Carlos until I left for college at age 17, the person in the household with whom I had the closest relationship was my paternal grandmother, Carmen.

Born in the Mallorca Islands, my paternal grandmother had a name of Jewish origin -- Carmen Torra. She was an elementary school teacher for 50 years. A widow when she came to live with us in 1933, she occasionally spoke to me of my grandfather, a sugar plantation manager who had been born in the Canary Islands. At every opportunity, she took pleasure in using her knowledge and skill to make games of teaching me geography and astronomy. At a very young age, I knew the names of the capitol cities of the world, and my grandmother had already begun teaching me much about the spiritual nature of ourselves. She impressed upon me the enormity of the universe and how much there was to learn. She liked to tell me that even though she was older than me, we had much in common because our spirits do not age.

My grandmother Carmen welcomed me into her room at any time I wanted to visit. My maternal grandmother, who was most interested in cooking and sewing and somewhat less interested in me, tried to discourage my late night forays to Carmen's room, but my mother stepped in. My mother recognized that Carmen's teaching was an asset to my education and being a truly loving woman, I am certain that she approved of the affection between my grandmother and myself. Carmen liked to hold me on her lap, something she had done with neither of my brothers. Perhaps she held me because I allowed it. With a grandmother who brought vitality to my mind, a graceful mother who was the heart and soul of a loving home, a sister whose cheerful spirit always gave me pleasure, it is easy to understand the appreciation that I gained for the feminine sex at an early age. The first gift that I gave to anyone was a bunch of jasmine flowers to a girl who was ten years older than I.

At the age of six I was enrolled at the private Columbus Elementary School. I believe that my elementary education was very good, as it seemed to provide an excellent base for my high school education at Candler College. I had no difficulty learning subjects in school, in part because of the values that were continually reinforced at home. We were taught to be responsible. We did our homework studiously. We never left the house without permission. We were to avoid any activity that our parents considered a vice. Of course, some of these activities, such as playing cards or gambling, were quite interesting to spirited children. On the occasions that we disobeyed, we were sent to bed for an entire weekend day. Gambling for pennies was fun but not worth the Saturday that we spent in our rooms. We knew that our father's life instructions were non-negotiable, although it was clear that we were being prepared to take our own responsibilities. If we wanted to smoke after we were 18, that was a personal decision. Until then, absolutely no smoking was allowed.

The family's religious heritage is, as most Cubans, Roman Catholic. My father was less attentive to the matters of the church than my mother, but we were raised with a firm belief in God. The religious holiday that we celebrated was Epiphany, the January 6<sup>th</sup>

church festival commemorating the coming of the Magi. It was on this holiday that we gave and received gifts. Instead of Santa Claus, we wrote letters to the three Wise Kings -- Baltazar, Gaspar and Melchior -- to ask for gifts we hoped to receive. We also celebrated two national holidays; May 20, the day of Independence from Spain, and the January 28th birthday of poet and revolutionary Jose Marti who has stood as a symbol of freedom and anti-racism in Cuba for 150 years.

In terms of celebration, children's birthday parties were the most fun of all, always with traditional piñatas and games.

My happy childhood was darkened by one very stark event. A young friend was accidentally shot and killed by his brother. The boy was buried within 24 hours of his death, since embalming was not customary. Many family and friends gathered for the wake and burial, sharing the family's great tragedy. Cuban families were typically social and gregarious. Prior to Castro's regime this was clearly seen in their ties to churches as well as in the extreme popularity of social clubs.

When I was twelve years old, I took a remarkable trip with my lifelong friend, Ruben Batista. The son of the Cuban president, Fulgencio Batista, Ruben lived only a few houses away. He was eleven, 16 months younger than I. The year was 1943. Batista, knowing that his presidency was coming to an end, decided to take advantage of his resources to give his only son an extensive tour of Cuba. He carefully planned the summer trip. Because Ruben and I were such good friends, I was invited to go along. On the departure day, we stood together on the runway, dressed in white linen suits, dark ties and hard safari hats, trying to appear more confident than we really were about our first airplane flight. The twin-engine military plane took us to the eastern end of the island. This was the beginning of a month-long adventure that basically involved touring the width and length of the island and then returning home. We were accompanied and guided by two trusted military officers. One was the secretary to the president, an important man in charge of Batista's correspondence and his library, and the other was a trained valet who saw to our needs whether we were in a hotel or in a military camp. We took many side trips, sometimes riding in military vehicles and sometimes being flown in a single engine Ford airplane. As the trip progressed I began to grasp the power and enormous influence of Ruben's father. Neither Ruben nor I had carried money at any time. Everything we needed was provided and kind attention was given to showing us the country.

Eastern Cuba is mountainous and rich in mineral resources. Most people believe that sugar is Cuban's most important product, but in fact, the large open quarries of the nickel mines provide an equal or greater resource. Ruben and I had never seen such a large and organized operation as the American mining camps. The Americans were mining nickel in Cuba to use in ammunition and weaponry for the war against Germany. It was also in these eastern mountains -- the Sierra Maestra mountain range -- that Castro began the revolution that has shaped the political organization in Cuba for the last 40 years.

I enjoyed the trip no more than I enjoyed the companionship of my friend. To this day, Ruben and I remain connected by our childhood friendship and life-long memories. Ruben attended and graduated from Princeton University, and has made his life and career as a businessman in Miami where he maintains a low profile compared to his famous father. We see each other once a year. His father died in 1975.

## CHAPTER 3: THE TEEN YEARS

My teenage years were a wonderful time. I was a student at a private Methodist school, Candler College, and I enjoyed my growing independence. There were many Americans living and working in Cuba and it was to my father's credit that he recognized the need for his children to learn English. Candler College provided my English instruction as well as a solid preparation for entrance into an American university. Learning English was not easy for me. Unlike Carlos, who seemed to have a better ear for music and language, I had to work diligently to acquire a new language. By the end of my senior year, however, I had begun to think in English as well as Spanish and I could converse in English without thinking about actual translation. It helped that some of my classmates were English speaking Americans.

My favorite teacher in high school, and possibly the most influential teacher of my life, was an American from Alabama. Like other Americans who taught at Candler College, Mrs. Kirby was a devout Methodist who viewed her work as a life mission. I'm not sure if I ever knew her first name, but my respect for her was enormous. She was tall, thin, and simply dressed. She taught mathematics, English, and the Pentateuch—the first five books of the Jewish and Christian Bible. Until I became Mrs. Kirby's student, learning and education had been about memorization. There were facts and pieces of information ---the names of things, the sequence of events, the meanings of words and concepts. Mrs. Kirby insisted that I put information together, to see the relationship of knowledge. Everyday she challenged me to think and reason. The understanding that I could use logic to resolve a problem was one of the highlights of my life. I remember going home, elated with new understanding, and telling my parents, "I KNOW! I know how to do it!!" Mrs. Kirby gave me insight that has served me for the rest of my life. She also showed me the power and influence of an excellent teacher.

As a high school student, transportation from home to school was by bus or streetcar. Although my father owned a car, we were not driven to school. Public transportation was readily available and was used so extensively that often there was only standing room in the bus or on the streetcars. If seats were filled, drivers drove past the stops. Running to catch a moving streetcar and jumping through an open door to catch a ride was routine activity. I don't recall seeing anyone injured in this manner, but being quick and athletic was certainly an asset when one was in need of a ride.

Although I wasn't big, I was quick, coordinated and strong. Sports became an important part of my life as soon as I was old enough to play. Both social and sport activities were centered around social clubs and club memberships. I spent many summer days playing tennis and swimming at our club, always enjoying the company of other teenagers. I also played amateur baseball in some extremely competitive fields. One club gave me their membership so that I could compete on their baseball team. I saw a lot of action in my position as shortstop and I could also hit the ball farther than other players my size. One of the competitors on an opposing team was Willie Miranda who eventually became a player for the New York Yankees. I took great pleasure in being part of a very successful team and I gained much in the way of socialization from involvement in sports.



Jorge with teenage friends at Club Nautico, 1947.

Like my friends, I was allowed to date as a teenager but relationships were generally confined to a fairly organized social club or a circle of family friends. Parents expected us to socialize within our group and they were present for all activities where both boys and girls were present. Conversations, going to movies, playing card games or bingo, dining at a restaurant -- all these activities were chaperoned. At the time the girls in Havana became 15, their birthdays were celebrated with beautiful parties. Many of their best friends were invited. The young ladies needed dance partners. My friends and I were all too happy to participate.

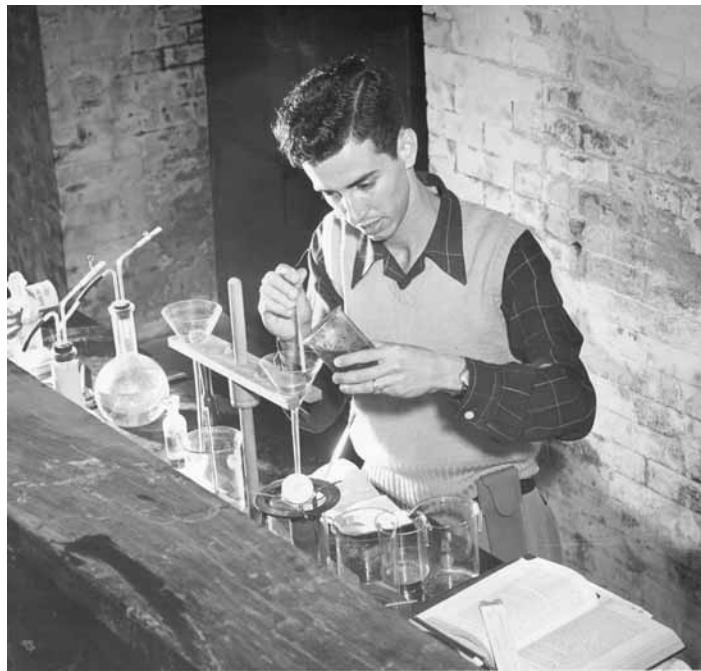
As my preparatory education in Cuba was nearing an end, I began to seriously consider a college choice. The American teachers at my high school encouraged me to think about attending a number of American universities. I graduated from high school 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in my class, and on the recommendations of my teachers, was offered a full scholarship to Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. An exciting future was beginning to unfold.

In 1948, I experienced a great loss. My grandmother Carmen died. At 17, I was young, high spirited and enthusiastic for life. The future was pulling me away from my childhood and away from Cuba. But the loss of my grandmother closed a chapter of my life that had meant a great deal to me. I would not experience loss of that magnitude again until, many years later, my mother passed way.

## CHAPTER 4: ADULTHOOD

Moving to the United States marked the beginning of my adult life. The most rewarding aspects of my life have happened to me as a result of study, work, research and the relationships that I formed in America. On a full scholarship, I enrolled at Oklahoma Baptist University in September of 1948. I had mixed feelings about leaving home, but my family and friends were excited about my opportunity to study in the United States.

My parents accompanied me on the trip from Havana to Shawnee, Oklahoma. We traveled from Cuba to Miami by plane, took a train from Miami to New York City and a bus all the way from New York City to Shawnee. In New York, my parents bought the winter clothing that they understood I would need during a Midwestern winter. A cold winter was not something we had experienced in Cuba. My parents and I enjoyed the trip together. At OBU, I was assigned a dormitory room, enrolled as a science student, and began classes. I was not exactly the most typical freshman at the university. I was Cuban. In Oklahoma. There was not another Spanish speaking native in sight. My English skills improved immediately!



Microbiologist turned biochemist, my life's work began to take shape in the laboratory at Oklahoma Baptist University.

The chairman of the chemistry department at OBU, Dr. Jack Purdue, was an excellent professor and had a profound influence on my life. Even as a university freshman, I knew that he had confidence in me. I wanted to be a biology major but through his encouragement, my studies were guided toward bio-chemistry. Working with him, even over-achieving under his guidance, became an important part of my higher education. He holds a special place in my memory.

Socially, my tendency was to be outgoing and gregarious. As one of only two students at OBU from a “foreign” country, I became something of an attraction. The campus community wanted to know about Cuba, about my life in Cuba, and about me. I was enthusiastic about conversation and happy to make new acquaintances. Most of the social activities at the university were related to the Baptist student organizations and since there was not much of anything else to do in Shawnee, Oklahoma, I became a Baptist!

One of my favorite friends at OBU was Charles Driscoll, who had been in the American Navy but was following his military career with higher education. Charles was witty and fun, and we had a great time together. Charles liked to say that he was older and more experienced than I, and therefore I should take his advice and avoid liquor and wild women. The truth was, we rarely, if ever, encountered either. Charles visited my home in Havana on two occasions and we became lifelong friends.



Swimming at Ayala Springs in Havana on summer vacation, 1951.

Returning to Cuba during the summer and school vacations was a much anticipated pleasure. I could spend time with my family and socialize with good friends in Havana.



New Year's Eve Dance in Havana, 1951

At OBU, I also became acquainted with Jean Ruf, the only other international student at the university. A graduate student from France, Jean was as much of an anomaly in Shawnee, Oklahoma as was I. Jean was great fun and we got along so well that I invited him to accompany me on a visit to Cuba. I would have been even happier about that visit if I could have foreseen the outcome! Jean met my sister, Olga, who was working for the Royal Bank of Canada in Havana. Within a year of their introduction, they were married and living in the United States.



My brother in law, Jean Ruf, and me, Cuba, 1954.

There has been a family joke that Jean was attracted to my sister because she bears a strong resemblance to me!

My good friend Jean is a fortunate man.

Everyone who knows Olga loves her.

Olga and Jean have 2 children, 2 grandchildren,  
and now live in Miami.

During the time I was an undergraduate student at OBU, there was a young lady named Dorothy Busha living in Council Hill, Oklahoma, who had graduated from high school at the age of 15. The daughter of Warwick George (W.G.) and Bessie Busha, she was working as a church secretary since her protective father believed that, even though she had earned a high school diploma, she was too young to leave home and go to a university. W.G. and Bessie were farmers and ranchers, independent and thoughtful in nature. Bessie was a study in good humor and perseverance, as she had had a stroke in her young adulthood which left her unable to use her left arm. She and W.G. raised four children. Dorothy was the youngest and their only daughter. Dorothy was energetic and eager to become a university student, and she would enter OBU just as I departed.

I received my Bachelor of Science in Chemistry in 1952, and immediately began graduate study at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. Within two years, my master's degree in microbiology and biochemistry was completed and I had begun doctoral studies. During the years I was working on my Ph.D. (1954-56), I was also teaching mathematics, chemistry and organic chemistry at my alma mater, Oklahoma Baptist University and at St. Gregory College.

In the fall of 1953, while I was away from Shawnee, Dorothy Busha's parents agreed that she was ready to leave Council Hill and enroll as a freshman at Oklahoma Baptist University. Dorothy was a business student, interested in American government and diplomacy. The faculty and administration at OBU quickly identified her as an extremely capable student. With solid secretarial experience already behind her, she was eventually chosen to be secretary to the president of the university. When we met in 1954, Dorothy was a full-time student with a full-time job. Dorothy's job placed her in the front office, in front of the university president, the first point of contact for visitors to the president and vice president. I had to pass her desk to see anyone in her office. And she was beautiful.

I often visited the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. James Scales. There were professional reasons for my visits of course, but going into the office -- greeting Dorothy -- had become so pleasant that we made plans for our first date.

Our second date was a dinner date and we had a delightful evening. But our first date caused quite a disturbance. I had been asked to speak and show slides of Cuba to a church group in Ada, Oklahoma. I invited Dorothy to come along. It was quite a distance to the church. There were questions and discussion at the end of my presentation and soon it became clear to Dorothy and me that we did not have time to make it back to campus by the undergraduate curfew. Dorothy was in trouble.

An angry dean of women met Dorothy at the dormitory door. Even though she knew both of us and knew exactly where we'd been, the rules were strict and she could not excuse our late arrival. She scolded Dorothy severely, telling her that she could not believe that a reliable young woman such as Dorothy would break important rules. The scolding lasted a long time, but finally the woman softened and asked what she really wanted to know. "Did you have a good time? What did Jorge talk about?"

In the same year that I met Dorothy, my oldest brother Bebo died of meningitis in Havana. He had suffered debilitating effects of the disease for some time but somehow his death still came as a surprise. My parents were heartbroken, as were Carlos, Olga and I. We will always remember Bebo and his great talent as an artist.



Carlos, Mother and Father behind  
Jorge (kneeling) beside Bebo and Olga,  
Christmas 1951.

As a graduate student in Oklahoma, I was balancing a heavy teaching load with completion of my doctorate. Dorothy and I were together, but sometimes apart. She was being groomed for a career in government, probably as an assistant to a political figure or a diplomat. I dreamed of a faculty appointment in a fine science department. By the spring of 1957, Dorothy and I knew that we would marry. We wanted to be together, even if that cost Dorothy the opportunity to live and work in Washington, D.C. And, if we were married, I needed a permanent position. OBU offered me a contract, but I had been at the school since 1948 and felt that I wanted a new opportunity. My future showed up as a phone call from Dr. James Findlay, president of Drury College in Springfield, Missouri.

I did not hesitate to accept Dr. Findlay's invitation to meet with him in Springfield. He made arrangements for my stay at the Kentwood Arms Hotel. Through the day and throughout dinner that evening we became acquainted. We discussed a professorship in

Chemistry and the college expectations, and he generously invited me to his home for breakfast the next morning. Later I was told that not everyone being interviewed for a faculty position got invited to the Findlay home. Apparently being hired at Drury in those years required the approval of Mrs. Findlay. I am very happy that she liked me. The Drury professorship was exactly what I wanted, and accepting it became the most important career move of my life. President Findlay offered me the chemistry post even before I left Springfield and then, without qualification or explanation, he presented me to the dean, Dr. Frank Clippinger, as a new member of the faculty. I began teaching chemistry at Drury in the fall semester of 1957.



My laboratory and classrooms were in Pearson Hall, a stately and historical science building that still stands on Drury's campus.



I immediately loved teaching at Drury and felt inspired by its remarkable tradition. The college had been founded and nurtured over the years by true educators, many of them coming from prestigious universities in the east. I appreciated both the history and mission of the college and planned to do my best to support it. But there was one more thing I needed to be truly happy. My separation from Dorothy was actually dangerous. On two occasions, I nearly fell asleep on the highway driving to Oklahoma to see her. Our wedding date was set for November 21, and we visited each other as often as we could. On our wedding day, I waited in a hotel room until time for the ceremony. Many of our friends came for the wedding. Charles Driscoll, my good friend at OBU, was my best man. It was a happy day that could easily have turned into a disaster. In November, the Elm Grove Baptist Church was drafty and cold. Dorothy was preparing for the wedding in a side room that contained a gas heating stove. Before getting into her wedding gown, she attempted to light the warming stove and was burned. It could have been tragic but Dorothy, being Dorothy, found a way to continue. And thus began a

marriage and a life with Dorothy that I would love to do all over again. I regret not one moment of our 46 (so far!) years together.



The first day of our married life.  
November 21, 1957

In December, following our November wedding, I took Dorothy to meet my mother and father in Havana. She already was acquainted with my sister because Olga had attended OBU in 1956. Dorothy was excited about her first trip out of the United States and eager to meet my family. She left Missouri in a tailored suit with a white mink collar, obviously dressed to make a beautiful first impression. The sun was shining in Havana when we arrived and the day was hot – certainly no climate for wearing fur. However uncomfortable she may have been in her winter suit, Dorothy's warmth and charm suited the family. Dorothy met the gracious and gentle woman who taught me how to love, and she admired the handsome and powerful figure that my father had always been. It was the first and last time that we visited Cuba.

Our first home together in Springfield was on Walnut Street. The Grey Gables Apartment Building is now called Greystone and houses a hair salon. In 1957, the University Plaza Hotel was not just across the street. The neighborhood was serene and we loved our apartment. A year later, we moved to a house at 1543 S. Fremont because our first baby was on the way. Anne was born on September 27, 1958. Her arrival was one of the happiest occasions of my life. I was thrilled to have a baby girl, and decided right away that if we had more children, they should all be girls. I sent Dorothy red roses and visited the hospital at every opportunity. Preparing to bring Anne home on a cool fall day, I turned the heat up in the house to make sure the new mother and baby would be warm and comfortable. As soon as we arrived at home, Anne started to cry. Neither of us had had any experience with babies at all, but we tried everything we could think of to calm her. Nothing made a difference, and we grew more and more concerned. Finally in fear and frustration, Dorothy called a friend, June Steinbauer, who promised to come right over. June immediately sized up the situation.

"This baby is too hot," she said. The house was too hot. Anne's blanket and clothing were too hot. Anne was not ill, just hot. We learned that some problems have simple solutions and began to rely on our common sense. Within five days, however, Dorothy was ill with a breast infection that put an end to breastfeeding Anne. She had to spend two weeks in the hospital which left me in charge of our new baby. Bessie came from Oklahoma to care for Anne during the day so that I could maintain my teaching schedule. But at night and early in the morning, I fed Anne, rocked and bathed her, and managed to

be a fairly successful substitute for her mother. I loved her more than I can say. She was a wonderful baby.

The heating system in the house, which had worked all too well on Anne's first day at home, failed mid-winter because the main gas line was severed by construction. The entire south part of Springfield had no gas, and therefore no heat. Because of that incident, Dorothy and I found two of our most wonderful friends. Dr. Willard Graves was a math professor at Drury, and one of my respected colleagues. When his wife, Winifred, learned that we had no heat in our house, she insisted that we bring our baby to their home immediately. That was the beginning of a life-long family friendship. Willard and Winifred Graves were our mentors and friends. We have special memories of wonderful Easter dinners with the Graves family.

We also had another friend who was like a member of our family. Robert Pennington was a music professor trained at Northwestern University who taught at Drury from 1959 to 1966. Robert was (and is) extremely bright and well read and he was particularly interested in other cultures. We began an almost daily ritual of having lunch downtown at Heers Department Store in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Fountain Plaza Room. Other faculty members joined us frequently for this lunchtime respite in the middle of a working day. Robert, with his love of literature, languages and music, added a wonderful dimension to my life. Dorothy loved his big laugh and his sense of humor and made him so welcome at our home that he routinely joined the family for dinner. Robert helped us pack everything and move to 2126 S. National because, with our second child on the way, we again needed a bigger house.

Charles Luis arrived on November 12, 1960. We had a perfect little girl and a perfect baby boy. Dr. Joe Johnston delivered our second child, just as he had the first, and I delivered another dozen red roses.

Another significant event occurred in 1960. This was the year that my family left Cuba and moved to the United States. While my father's connection with the Cuban army had benefited him in 1939, it came full circle and cost him dearly in 1959. Because he had been an army officer under Batista, Castro's government held him under house arrest for nearly a month as the malevolent nature of the dictatorship began to be revealed. Seizing the first opportunity, father gathered the family and got everyone out of Cuba. My parents were in their late fifties at this time, and the move basically meant that they would be starting their lives over again. Fortunately father's training and professional reputation resulted in his being hired to work for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. This work took my parents to Washington, D.C. where they lived for 20 years until my father's retirement. Although mother never became fully fluent in English, she adjusted to the loss of her home and lived well as a United States resident.

After retirement, they moved to Miami and lived again among Spanish speaking friends and neighbors, many of whom had come from Cuba.

In 1961, Dorothy's father, W.G., died of cancer. His progressive illness was a sad and difficult time for Dorothy who, with two small children, made many trips to Council Hill to assist her parents. W.G. knew two of our children, Anne and Charles, but unlike my parents, and Bessie, who watched all three of our children grow up, W.G. never met Phillip.

Phillip arrived on November 3, 1962. Dorothy and I were happily back in St. John's hospital to welcome our beautiful third child. Dr. Johnson delivered the baby and I ordered the roses.



Jorge and Anne, Dorothy and Charles  
1960



Phillip, 1963.



In preparation for each new baby, we had moved to a larger house but this move felt different than the others. The house at 3905 S. Broadway was brand new, in a lively new neighborhood. Horace Mann Elementary School was just a few blocks from our front door. By the time their new brother arrived, Anne and Charles had already settled into their new home.



Before Phillip was two years old, I applied for and received my first Fulbright Lectureship. Dorothy and I were too young and too enthusiastic to fear any difficulties with taking our very young family abroad for an entire academic year. It was an enormous opportunity and a career move that took me into the international world of science.

My Fulbright lectureship was to take place at the University of Seville. Before our departure to Spain, I flew with Phillip to Washington D.C. to visit my parents. Dorothy packed at least 20 big suitcases with the clothing and articles that we were advised the family would need in a temporary Spanish home. With the help of a young Drury graduate and personal friend, Elaine Tewell, she drove all the way to the east coast with Anne and Charles. The luggage was packed into a small trailer behind the car. Anne, Charles and Phillip were 1, 3 and 5 years old. Our year in Spain was their

introduction to the size and culture of the world. We sailed from New York City on the SS Independence and, nine days later, arrived in the Spanish Port of Gibraltar. Everyone fared well on the voyage except Charles. Charles was terribly unhappy. He wanted to go home to his room, and he cried for his record player and his books.

Upon arrival in Gibraltar Dorothy put the children to bed in a hotel. Before midnight I became engaged in conversation with a taxi driver who agreed to take us to Seville at that very moment. With some reasonable protest, Dorothy woke the children and the six of us headed off into the night for a 4 hour drive across the countryside with our many pieces of luggage tied to the top of the taxi.

Initially our lives in Seville were an exercise in inconvenience. For one month, we stayed in a pension. Our living quarters were too small, the apartment owner was also the cook and the food was deplorable. Life became much better when we finally got our own rented house. The services of a housekeeper, a cook and a baby sitter were arranged and the family began to settle into a life very different than the one we knew in Springfield.



Anne, Charles, Phillip and Jorge  
A family walk in the park  
Seville, 1965

The lectureship at the university provided great stimulation for me. I was happy to be working with colleagues on an international scale and the professional experience was all that I hoped it would be. While I was concentrating on research and teaching, Dorothy was managing a Spanish home where 3 beautiful American children were growing, and two of them were learning Spanish. Anne and Charles attended private schools. Anne, at 5, had the most rigorous kind of elementary school experience. The school hours were long and she had homework every night. In Spain, children take national examinations at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade so all subjects that are tested must be mastered by that time. Charles, at 3, attended a French pre-school that was housed in an actual palace. I walked him to school every day in his little school uniform. He wore a gray suit, white shirt, plaid tie, and a little cape that was intended to protect his clothing from chalk. Charles was not eager to go to school, and getting him up the stairs to enter the school was sometimes upsetting. But once inside, and once the beautiful iron gates closed behind him, Charles sang the French national anthem, saluted his teachers and participated happily in the preschool experience. Charles, now, is more proficient in French than he is in Spanish and I attribute this in part to hearing the language at such an early age. Phillip was attended full-time by a nursemaid who spoke only Spanish.

She spent the days strolling Phillip around the neighborhoods. The sweetest and most beautiful baby imaginable, being separated from him upon our departure nearly broke this young woman's heart.



Jorge, Dorothy, Anne and Charles at home in Spain  
Baby Phillip was on an outing with his nurse.

When our lives in Spain began to feel natural and easier, we bought a car, a French Simca, and began to make weekend tours into the countryside. Our cultural induction was more complete than we thought. We began to attend and enjoy the bullfights. At first Dorothy was angry that I took her there and that I loved the spectacle of an event that she perceived to be cruel. But she wanted to return. To appreciate the culture of the bullfight is to understand the soul of Spain. Spaniards honor the color and the valor of the matador, the bravado and strength of the bull. The bullfight represents a classic struggle of life and death, where everything belonging to both is in the balance, and no triumph is assured. Anne and Charles were with us when we watched the greatest matador of all times, El Cordobes, fight in Seville. His arrival was advertised for weeks and the fight was exhausting. At the end El Cordobes, bloodied and bruised, was triumphantly carried from the ring on the shoulders of the spectators. For his bravery, he was given the ears and tail of the bull.

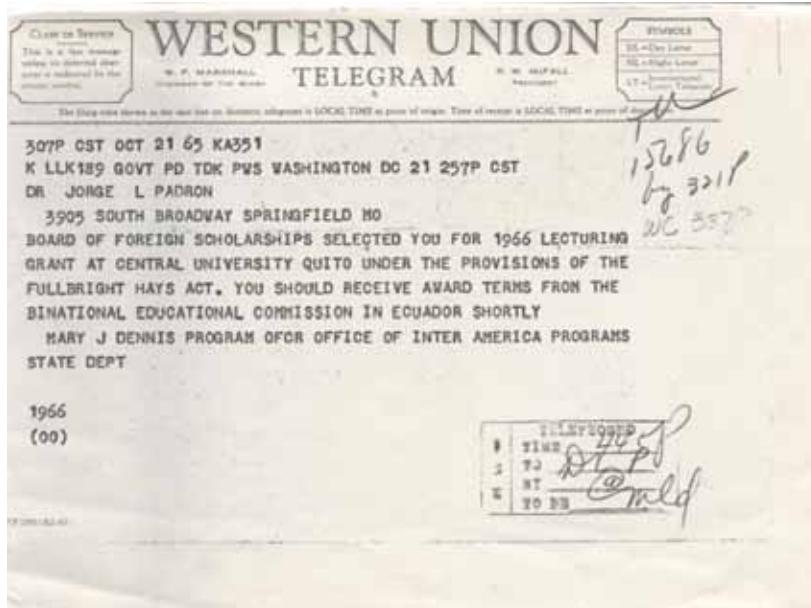
We returned to the United States, a family broadened and changed by our experience in Spain.

We picked up our lives in America pretty much where we left off. I was teaching and researching, Dorothy was teaching at Southwest Missouri State University and we were watching the children grow.



Dr. Jorge Padron, front row second from left, with the Drury Faculty in 1964.

In 1965 I applied for and was awarded a second Fulbright. This time, with the children 4, 6, and 8 years of age, we prepared to spend the 1966-67 year in Ecuador.



We rented our Springfield house to a faculty member at Drury, packed the children's belongings, and flew to Quito, the capital of Ecuador. Quito is nestled in a mountain valley almost on the equator. The valley is surrounded by Andes Mountain peaks that rise to altitudes above 20,000 feet. The terrain was different than anything I'd seen. Initially I felt that we

had arrived on another planet, but the region is so beautiful that it took no time at all to fall in love with the environment and its climate of perpetual spring. From Quito, one can leave a snow-capped mountain top and arrive 4 hours later at a coastal plain on the

Pacific Ocean. While the mountain climate is temperate, the coastal area is extremely hot, perfect for producing the country's enormous supply of bananas.

My job was to set up a biochemistry laboratory at the University Central. There had been a medical school at the university for many years, but never a biochemistry laboratory for student use. The university also had a very laissez faire attitude about laboratory work. It was simply not yet a part of the accepted teaching practice. Since it was not possible to teach practical aspects of biochemistry without an appropriate lab, I had to scrape together the equipment and translate a lab manual into Spanish. My next challenge was to overcome the students' tendency to treat any laboratory experience like a game to be either enjoyed or disregarded. The only way that I could change this attitude was to be completely consistent in my own teaching behavior. My class met everyday and on time. Unlike the expectations of punctuality and commitment so common in an American University, no one in Ecuador was overly concerned if neither students nor faculty showed up for class. The critical need to improve living conditions, medical care, dentistry, engineering, and architecture in Ecuador was the reason the United States provided Fulbright lecturers to assist the country. I took that responsibility seriously, and eventually my students did, too.

In this period of time, student activism and protests were having a major impact on the operation of all Ecuadorian universities. Small but visible groups of Communist students sometimes behaved in hostile ways. When their political temperature was high, the Communist students made noise in the streets against their rivals. If they really wanted to make a point, they called for a strike. Most of the students in the universities wanted no part of this trouble and so they simply went home. University classes were cancelled until the strike was over. Thus, a handful of boisterous Communist students disrupted and manipulated the entire university at will. I had never observed behavior like this and I was professionally unsure how to react. My students actually resolved the matter by asking that the class continue to meet. Ours was the only class that ever met during a student strike. Even the two communist leaders in my class came every day.

Our family life in Ecuador was as close to ideal as it could ever be. We moved into a comfortable house, Anne and Charles were enrolled in private Cardinal Spellman schools, one for boys and one for girls. We had a housekeeper, a laundress, a cook, and a babysitter for Phillip. Dorothy's Spanish improved tremendously and she communicated easily with the household staff and with vendors in the open markets where she loved to shop. Anne and Charles, doing their schoolwork in Spanish, quickly became fluent. Charles often made the call for a taxi on the telephone, so easily conversant in Spanish that he could actually request our favorite driver. Anne, Charles and Phillip were charming children. In Ecuador, as in Spain, they easily made friends.



Jorge, Anne, Charles and Phillip on a Quito mountainside, 1966.

On the morning our family left Quito, all my students were at the airport at 7:30 a.m. to say goodbye. They gave me a silver platter engraved with their names. The academic dean at the university, Dr. Roberto Chediak, advised the U.S. State Department that this was the first time students at the university had honored a professor in this way. I was, and remain, touched by their appreciation -- even that of the card-carrying communists.

Our family had a truly wonderful season of focusing on one another in Ecuador. There was no television. We had breakfast, lunch and dinner together. We spent hours in the parks and exploring the beautiful countryside. Our life at home was somewhat similar to my childhood in Cuba. Dorothy and I agreed it would be wonderful to maintain this lifestyle with the children when we returned to the United States. Our intent was good, but probably not destined to succeed. In less than a week of our arrival back in Springfield, we had returned to a typically American lifestyle. The children wanted to spend more time with their friends. They didn't want to remain in the house after dinner. And television was interesting all over again.



Padron family portrait, Ecuador, 1965.



Playful Padrons in less formal attire, Ecuador.

Even with new friends and interests pulling the children in different directions, we have always been a family that enjoyed time together. A favorite family story is about the Christmas when we decided we would prepare and share a traditional Cuban feast of roasted pig. You can't buy a whole pig just anywhere. We were able to purchase a suckling pig in Oklahoma and we brought it home to Springfield in our car, frozen and fastened to a board. I took the frozen pig (on the board) to a local barbecue restaurant and arranged to have it roasted. We invited another Springfield family with origins in Cuba to join us for a holiday feast. It was a festive and happy celebration.

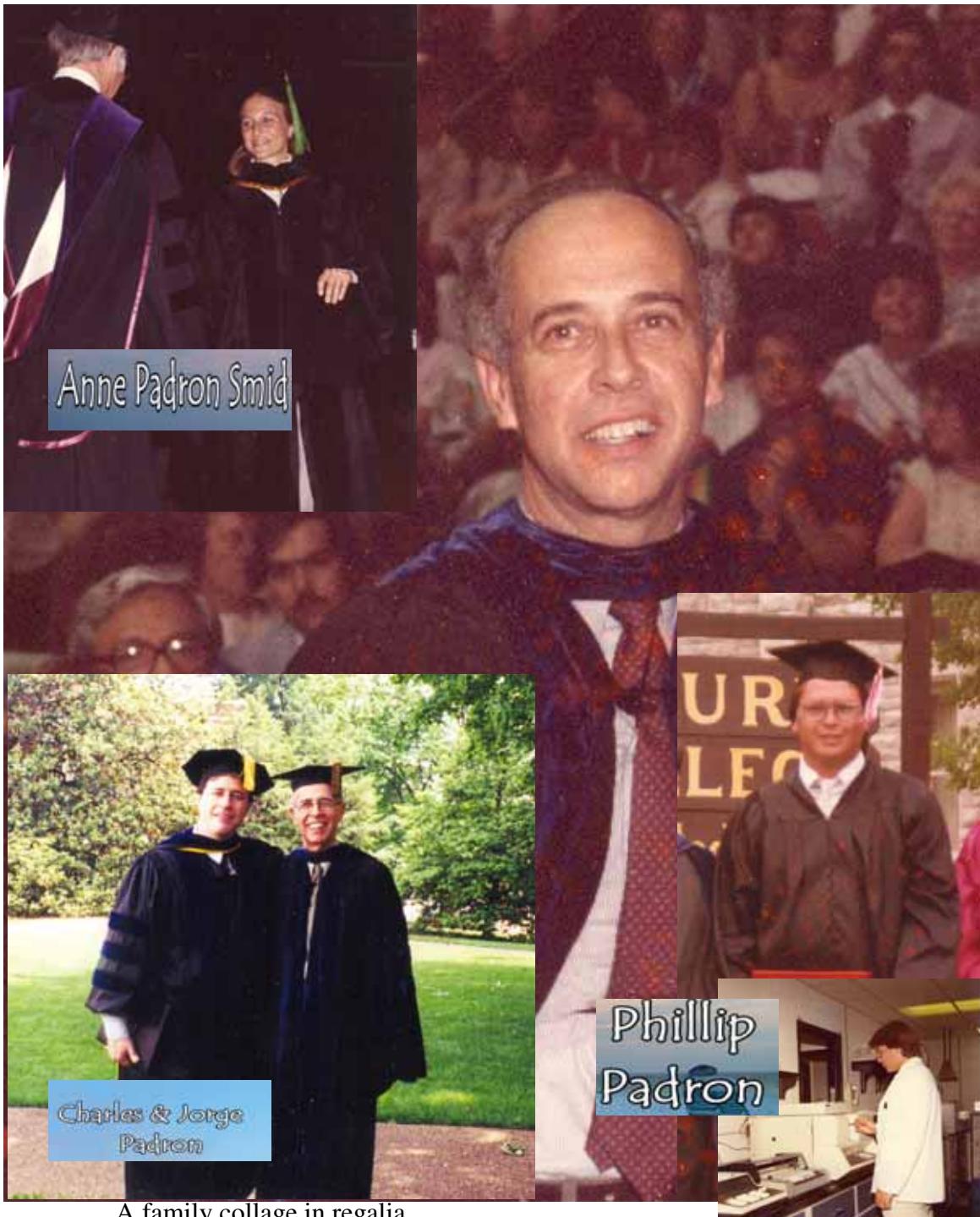
For several years, our favorite family retreat was spending time in our lake cabin. I purchased property on Table Rock Lake and designed the cabin just as I wanted it to be.

It had a very relaxed atmosphere, and we never installed a telephone. The children loved the water as I do, and they were good swimmers. They also liked to water ski and were active in other sports in the neighborhood and at school. In no time, they were teenagers. They had opinions of their own and ideas of their own. And they brought new energy and many new friends into the cabin and into the house.



Padron family portrait, 1979.

The children attended Horace Mann Elementary, Cherokee Junior High School and Kickapoo High School. Anne chose to attend Greenwood Laboratory School for junior high school and her freshman year of high school. After high school, their pursuit of higher education defined an entire chapter of our lives. Anne took a straight line through the pre-med program and medical school at the University of Missouri – Kansas City. Charles's interests were diverse and he experimented with several fields of study before eventually completing his degree in philosophy at American College in Paris. Phillip chose Drury and completed a chemistry degree in four years with a grade point near the top of the graduating class. Like his grandfather, and father, Phillip is a chemist.



A family collage in regalia.

Our disciplines are medicine, philosophy, humanities, chemistry and bio-chemistry.

Our third generation chemist, here is Phil in the lab at Drury.

I returned to Ecuador alone in the summer of 1968 for a shorter Fulbright lectureship at Guayaquil University. The State Department offered an additional five month appointment in Peru but by this time, the demands of my department chairmanship at Drury were too heavy for me to be away. Drury was undertaking a major curriculum

review and along with Dr. Graves, Dr. Fryer and others, I was committed to the concept of preserving academic standards. I wanted to be engaged in curriculum development and in faculty discussion that would shape the academic program. Without doubt my commitment to high standards caused my colleagues to consider my potential to become the vice president for academic affairs. I was appointed to the position in 1973.



In the Dean's chair, 1974

The 1970's were an enormously challenging decade for Drury. Many private colleges were experiencing drops in enrollment and there was serious concern about the financial stability of schools the size of Drury. Alumni support was critical and by the fourth year of an enrollment decline, the officers knew it was important to keep a cool head and a tight rein on spending. The school was still attracting and graduating fine students and it seemed that our task was to work hard and plan wisely for the present and the future. As we passed the halfway mark of the decade, we were simply trying to hold the college steady. But that year, 1976, brought events that no one could foresee.

I was 45 years old and totally committed to my work as dean. I stayed connected to the classroom and to laboratory research at Drury and I benefited from friendships with Drury colleagues with whom I worked and played. Professors Dickson Young, Curt Strube and Harvey Asher were among the many colleagues who added pleasure and collegiality to my workplace. I had no hint of impending illness other than an odd incident at a faculty meeting where I'd suddenly felt faint and short of breath. On reflection, I had possibly experienced earlier moments of weakness while playing tennis. Arterial heart disease revealed itself in the middle of a frightening night in May when both Dorothy and I realized that I was truly ill. I was having severe pains in my arms and Dorothy called a gynecologist. Even if Dr. Mac Bonebrake's expertise was not the specialty I needed, he was the friend we could rely upon at this critical moment. He

insisted that we meet him at the hospital. An angiogram revealed that triple bypass surgery was needed. Between 1976 and 1990 I required four angioplasty procedures and had a second bypass surgery in 1990.

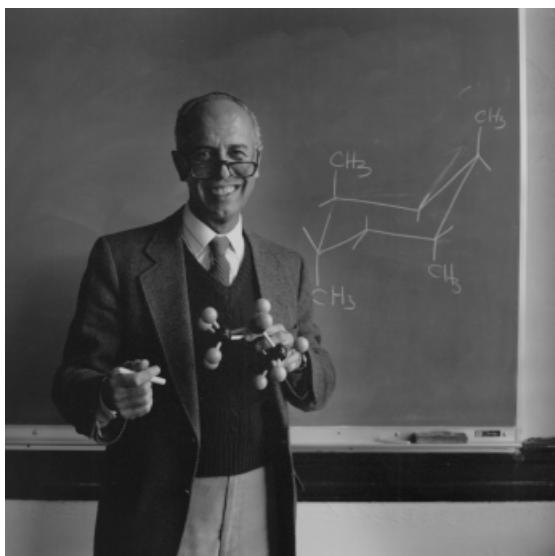
Following the first bypass in May 1976, I was still recovering from a very invasive operation when Drury's president, Dr. William E. Everheart, was killed in a car-train collision in Kansas. The college was shocked by the tragedy, but there were students enrolled and a school to run and the loss of Dr. Everheart did not change the truth of that. Hardly three months from open heart surgery, I became Acting President and held the office for more than a year. When Dr. Bartholomy left Drury in 1980 to take another presidency, I was named Acting President again. My job was to retain the good things that had been put in place and to restore goodwill among the faculty. It actually was not difficult. There was a spirit of community as faculty aligned to face the future. I held the office until the presidential search committee named the new president.

In 1978 I spent a summer as a senior research fellow at the University of Durham, the third oldest university in England. In the laboratory there, I researched biochemical problems in living cells. I continued my study of sugars in abnormal metabolism but also extended the summer work to cystic fibrosis, a disease of genetic origin, as is diabetes. In England, I found myself becoming absorbed in the beauty of the countryside, and I walked along the green pathways every day, fascinated with the great traditions of church power, royalty and aristocracy. I spent time in Durham reading about all the significant events in English history from the time of Richard II through Queen Victoria. How could I not be fascinated with history, as well as science, in this 900 year old medieval citadel? I returned from England with new insights about the wise use and abuse of power. Those understandings continue to shape my current view of world events and political affairs.

With thoughts of earlier times and important connections with students, I decided to leave the dean's office and return to my classroom and laboratory. I enjoyed being an administrator for the many years that I sat in the chair. But I was just as happy to take my clean white lab coat off its hook and return to my life's true mission. In the fall of 1984, I received another Fulbright and lectured again in Quito during the fall semester. After this international semester, I chose to remain on campus, closer to home and in some proximity to my cardiologist. My faculty office and classrooms were in the Lay Science Building and with my colleagues in the science division, we added a new decade of science education to Drury's long history. I taught chemistry continuously in the Lay Science Building until my retirement in 1996.



Retirement celebration, May, 1996 .



A glucose molecule must be correct and a professor must point out an error, even if its at a party and on a cake!

It has been 13 years since heart surgery and I do all that I can to maintain my health. Even so, I had an equally frightening experience a year ago in Panama City, Florida. I began experiencing discomfort and because of my medical history, I was taken to the hospital in Nashville, Tennessee for tests. Physicians eventually indicated the opinion that the sensation in my back was being caused by a “growth” on the back of my heart. No one wants to hear news of any sort of abnormal growth. I was advised that surgery for either exploration or repair was out of the question. For a period of about 6 months, I experienced anxiety about the outcome of this new development. Anne sent my medical

records and scans to every expert who would review them. Over time, there has been a consensus that what appears on the film may be scar tissue from earlier bypass surgery. I exercise, watch my diet, and faithfully take prescribed medication. I am proceeding with life at its fullest, aware of the need to remain aware but not expecting trouble.

In 1990, my mother passed away. Until that happened, I could not even imagine how it would feel to grieve for her. It was the worst sadness of my life. My father died seven years later and I miss his presence as well, but I am happy to know that he was proud of my profession and my achievement.



My parents in Miami, 1987.

## CHAPTER 5: LIFE MISSION

My life mission has been to teach and through my work at Drury, I accomplished the dream of my life. I love the sharing of knowledge and the personal exchange that results in learning. I like students and I liked being in the classroom. My desire was to help all my students, not only those who were most able. And, as dean, I was truly interested in the welfare of all the faculty members at Drury, not just those perfectly suited to the job.

Because I took my teaching responsibility seriously, I continued to be a student myself. Show me a teacher who has stopped learning and you will see an ineffective teacher.

My interest in research grew out of studies in graduate school on the changes in the surfaces of cells. During my NATO fellowship, I worked with Dr. Paul Kent, of Oxford University, who is one of the world's leading authorities on the role of carbohydrates in cellular functions. My own research focused on changes in the amount and type of sugars present on the surface of red blood cells from diabetic patients. These changes are reflective of changes that occur in other cells in the diabetic and added to the body of knowledge regarding the kind of alterations that occur during the progress of the disease. There is currently a growing body of evidence that the changes in the interaction between sugars and proteins of diabetic patients are a major factor in the development of the complications of diabetes.

I am sure that I think less about the results of my years of research than I do about the accomplishments of my students who have become scientists, professors, physicians. I love hearing from former students and am always happy to know that graduates in many professions attribute success to their Drury education.

Being a good parent was as important to me as being an able professor, but there were times when I found parenting more complicated than teaching! Anne, Charles and Phillip are very different from each other. In terms of persistence and their life accomplishments, I admire each of them tremendously. Anne is a renowned radiologist, at the top of her profession. She and her husband, Dr. David Smid, completed arduous medical training that even forced the sacrifice of their living apart for one year of Anne's residency. David and Anne are wonderful physicians and parents. They are devoted to their family. During each period of my illness, Anne gave my health her full attention, researching treatments and being my constant advocate. At one time when no medical explanation was being revealed for pain that I was experiencing, Anne insisted that the doctors continue to look for a cause.

"My father is not crazy," she told them, "If he tells you that there is something there, its there!" When Anne speaks, her intent is heard. Dorothy and I give her so much credit for the care that I have received.

Charles is a professor of humanities and philosophy at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas. He is a true academic. His students benefit from his fine mind and

his endless pursuit of knowledge and understanding. Charles will always be an excellent teacher, because he will always be a student.

Phillip is a professional chemist. He owns and operates Phoenix Manufacturing Company in Springfield. The company makes detergents, resins and other products for industrial use. After working in this field for a number of years, Phillip made the leap to private business ownership and is now responsible for every aspect of the business operation. Phillip's heart of gold made him a truly special child and now, an attentive and loving father.

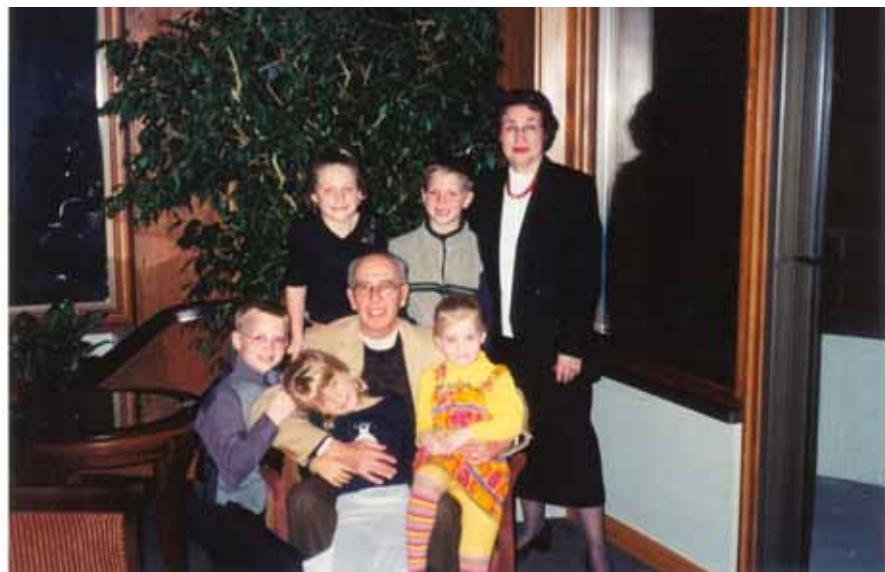
If Dorothy and I had had no other mission in life other than to raise three fine adults, I could say that we have been totally successful. Like her own mother and mine, Dorothy gave her children constant, unfailing encouragement and support. She created a wonderful home while pursuing her own teaching career.

## CHAPTER 6: LATER YEARS

Dorothy and I live in our family home on South Broadway. The neighborhood has matured. It is peaceful, beautiful and friendly. Our house is filled with family pictures and mementos of our time in Spain and Ecuador. Dorothy particularly treasures the Villacis oil paintings and pre-Incan artifacts. I am less fond of these physical things. Dorothy has always been an excellent cook and her “green thumb” surrounds us now with growing shrubs and flowers. She is the accountant who has taken care of all our banking and finances since July of 1957 when I sent her my first paycheck from Drury in an envelope with a big stack of bills.

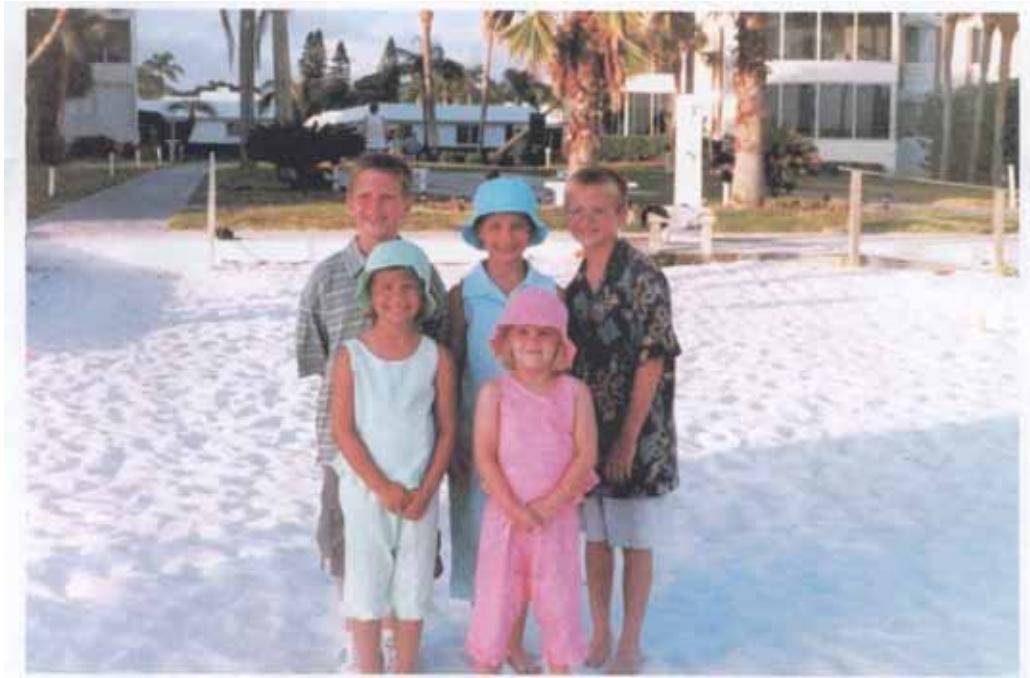


Our house has a happy spirit. We enjoy knowing that friends and family recall parties and lively conversations that have taken place in the house. Our children come home, as they always have, for birthdays and special occasions, and best of all, we see our grandchildren weekly.



My 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.

The children's name for Dorothy is “Nana” and their name for me is “Buelo”, a name which occurred as Anthony struggled to pronounce “Abuelo”, the Spanish word for grandfather.



No five children could give their grandparents more pleasure.

Anthony, Natalie and Andrew in back,  
Emily Jane and Amelia in front  
Sarasota Beach

Anthony, the oldest, is now a 12 year old artist. His brother Andrew, 11, is an able athlete, and their beautiful sister, Amelia, is highly advanced at age 6, in part because of her brothers' teaching. Anthony, Andrew and Amelia are Phillip's children. Anne and



David's daughters are Natalie, 10, and Emily Jane, 8. Natalie, like Andrew, is extremely athletic and has such a sweet and loving nature. Emily keeps everyone on their toes. She is very bright, and has much to say that is both observant and entertaining. The children are American in every regard. Their knowledge of heritage and diversity has been acquired through conversation rather than first-hand experience, but I am amused that Anthony enjoys the Spanish pronunciation of his name, "Antonio," and that his email address acknowledges his family history.... "Cubanboy@aol.com."



Andrew, Emily, Natalie, Amelia and Anthony airborne in Sarasota  
Photograph by their "Aunt Barbara", Dr. Barbara Wing

Anne and David have a second home in Sarasota, Florida and they invite the entire family for an annual retreat. This year, we plan to be together for Thanksgiving in Sarasota. The children are growing and changing as quickly as our own children did. A yearly retreat is a way to come back together as an entire family group, whereas in Springfield, everyone seems to be going in different ways to support the children in their activities. Sometimes Dorothy and I split up to attend the programs or events that occur at the same time. Dr. "Aunt" Barbara Wing is an important member of the support team too. When the kids need a ride or an outing that parents and grandparents cannot arrange, Barbara often provides both the solution and the pleasure of her companionship. In addition to owning and sharing a new PC that Anthony describes as "the mother of all computers," Aunt Barbara bakes a mean chocolate chip cookie and is always appreciative of a new and original drawing.

On a typical week day I spend an hour walking for exercise and then volunteer for 3 hours at the Cardiac Rehabilitation Center at St. John's hospital. I recently received the award pin for 3500 volunteer hours. Also, when needed, I translate for the Rainbow Network, a humanitarian organization that provides assistance to needy people in Nicaragua.

Rather than thinking about science, I am obsessed with world events, particularly the Israeli/Palestine conflict. I watch and listen for developments that affect peace in the world. My thoughts are of diplomacy, foreign affairs, of change, and of great hopes for my grandchildren's future.



The beautiful Florida coastline provides  
a setting for a yearly family retreat.

## CHAPTER 7: MY SPRINGFIELD EXPERIENCE

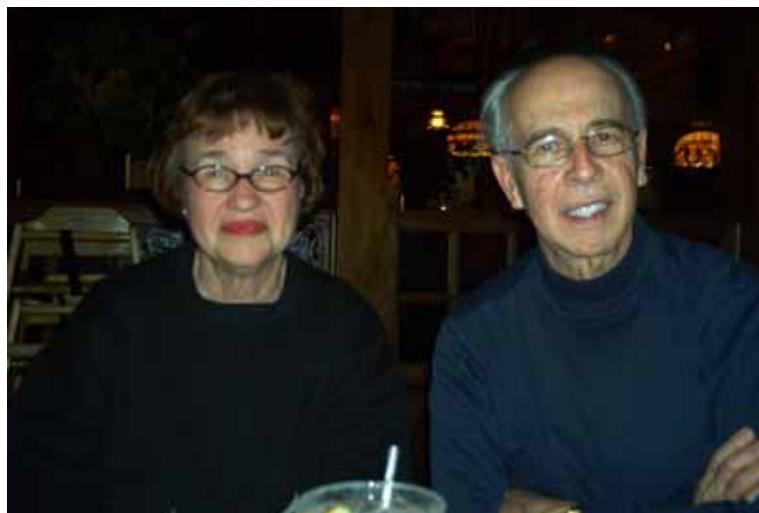
When I first arrived in Springfield, there were very few Hispanics and I was made extremely welcome. Cuba was not yet involved in any mass migration into the United States and Havana was known as a lively and beautiful destination for tourists. In Springfield, as in Oklahoma, I was invited to speak at luncheons of such organizations as the Lions Club, Rotary and church groups who wanted to know more about life in Cuba. As Castro began to reveal the malignant nature of his dictatorship, the American view of their southern neighbor clouded. The 92 miles that separated the United States and Cuba became more of a threat than a convenience and it was not easy to know that the Russian threat to the United States was facilitated by the Cuban government and the proximity.

My colleagues at Drury have viewed my ethnicity with interest. For many years, Dorothy and I had an annual party for Drury faculty to celebrate Epiphany, a holy day that is recognized more importantly in Cuba than in the United States. We were, and are, happy to share any aspect of Latin American culture.

Dorothy and I have belonged to the University Heights Baptist Church for 46 years. We took our children to church and have attended regularly. Neither in an academic community, or in a church have I experienced resentment toward people of other cultures.

I am sorry to say that in more recent years in Springfield, I have seen the ugly appearance of discrimination and prejudice. I find this very disturbing. If I have a message about racial differences, it would be this:

Other than native Americans, all Americans are immigrants. They must realize that they should treat each other as they would have wanted their ancestors to be treated. If everyone had this understanding, it would be irrational to hold prejudice against race or minority. Then we might see something better than people *behaving* irrationally because of their prejudice.





AN ADJUSTABLE CLAMP

Pencil drawing by Anthony Padron  
June 2003

There are two essential tools for holding our world together -- understanding and acceptance. Our humanity to each other is key to peaceful living; the lack of it causes irrevocable loss. We must always grow in wisdom and learn to be forgiving of each other's enormous shortcomings. Finding our similarities must take priority, even over the important preservation of cultural identities.

Dr. Jorge L. Padron

October 4, 2003

### **Appendix 1: Academic and Administrative Appointments**

1996 to Present	Professor Emeritus, Drury University
1964 – 1996	Professor of Chemistry, Drury College
1984, Fall	Fulbright Lecturer in Biochemistry Central University, Quito, Ecuador, Spain
6/80-3/81	Acting President, Drury College
7/76 – 2/77	Acting President, Drury College
1973 – 1982	Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Drury College
1968, Summer	Fulbright Lectureship in Biochemistry, Guayaquil University, Ecuador, Spain
1966 – 1967	Fulbright Lectureship in Biochemistry, Central University, Quito, Ecuador, Spain
1963 - 1964	Fulbright Lectureship in Biochemistry, University of Seville, Spain
1961 – 1962	Postdoctoral Research, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Okla. (Organic and Biochemistry)
1957 – 1963	Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Chemistry, Drury College (Organic and Biochemistry)
1956	Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Oklahoma Baptist University, (Organic Chemistry)
1954 – 1955	Instructor of Chemistry, Oklahoma Baptist University, (General Chemistry and Mathematics)

## **Appendix 2: Professional and Honorary Organizations, Honors and Special Government Assignments**

### **Professional Organizations**

American Chemical Society	New York Academy of Science
American Society for Microbiology	Missouri Academy of Science (President 1968)
American Association for the Advancement of Science	Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine
American Association of Clinical Chemistry	(Membership by invitation only)

### **Honorary Organizations and Honors**

1989	Distinguished Faculty Member Award from Drury Alumni Association
1985	Burlington Northern Faculty Achievement Award

### **Special Government Scientific Assignments**

1981 & 1982	Member of the NSF International Advisory Committee
1980	Panelist for the NATO Postdoctoral Fellowship Program- - U.S. Department of State
1980	Appointment Reader for National Institute of Health Grants in Infectious Diseases
1979	Panel Member for National Science Foundation, Scientific Equipment Development Grants
1975	Panel Member for National Science Foundation, Science Teacher Development Grants
1968	Panel Member for the National Science Foundation for Undergraduate Research Grants

### **Appendix 3: Publications**

- Padron, J. L. and Greg Farwell, (1990) “**Changes in Plasma Brain Membrane Silic Acid Levels in Erythrocytic Ghost Cells of Diabetic Human Patients.**” Transactions, Missouri Academy of Science, Vol. 24, p. 99.
- Padron, J. L. (1986) “**Glucosamine Acetoacetate Condensate: Its Effect Upon Bound Carbohydrate in Serum and Tissue of Born Diabetic Mice.**” Physiologist, Vol. 29, No. 4, 169.
- Padron, J. L. and S. Langguth, (1980) “**Glucosamine Acetoacetate Condensate IV: Its Effect Upon Diabetic Mice.**” Acta Diabetologica Latina, Vol. XVII, No. 2, 173-175.
- Padron, J. L., C. E. Anderson, N. Mian, and P. W. Kent, (1980) “**Ca<sup>2+</sup>--Stimulation of Sulphated Glycoprotein Secretion by Isolated Cell Preparations.**” Perspective in Cystic Fibrosis—Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Cystic Fibrosis Congress, p. 29a.
- Padron, J. L., J. T. Gallagher and P. W. Kent, (1973) “**Metabolically Active, Single Cell Preparation from the Mucosal Epithelium of a Rabbit’s Small Intestine.**” The British Journal of Experimental Pathology, Vol. 54, No. 4, 347-351.
- Padron, J. L., C. Hunt and R. N. Lewis, (1972) “**Glucosamine Acetoacetate Condensate III: Its Effect Upon Serum Insulin Levels and Glucose Uptake by Muscle and Liver.**” Japan Journal Med. Sci. Biol., Vol. 25, No. 2, 57-62.
- Padron, J. L., K. L. Grist, J. B. Clark and S. H. Wender, (1969) “**Specificity Studies on an Extracellular Enzyme Preparation Obtained from Quercetin Grown Cells of Aspergillus.**” Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications, Vol. 3, No. 4, 412-416.
- Padron, J. L. and M. R. Shetlar, (1967) “**Estudios Immunologicos de Plasma Bovino Quimicamente Tratado.**” Revista Facultad de Farmacia y Bio-Quimica, Quito, Ecuador, Vol. 12, 64-73.
- Padron, J. L., M. M. Sulman and R. N. Lewis, (1967) “**Glucosamine Acetoacetate Condensate: A New Anti-Alloxan-Diabetes Factor.**” Nature, Vol. 213, No. 5082, 1254-1255.
- Padron, J. L. and M. R. Shetlar, (1966) “**Incorporation Studies of 113I Labeled Chemically Treated Bovine Plasma.**” International Archives of Allergy and Applied Immunology, Vol. 29, 23-27.

Padron, J. L. and M. R. Shetlar, (1965) "Electrophoretic Studies of Chemically and Heat-Treated Bovine Plasma." International Archives of Allergy and Applied Immunology, Vol. 29, 23-27.

Padron, J. L., (1965) "The Effect of Chloramphenicol upon C<sup>14</sup> Labeled Glutamic Acid in Sensitive and Resistant Strains of *Staphylococcus Aureus*." Journal of Antibiotics, Vol. 18, No. 18, 99-100.

Padron, J. L., (1960) "The Action of Chloramphenicol on the Oxidation Pyruvate and Related Compounds by Sensitive and Resistant Strains of *Staphylococcus Aureus*." Bacteriological Proceedings, 1960, 30.

Shetlar, M. R., R. W. Payne, J. L. Padron, F. Felton, and W. K. Ishmael, (1956) "Objective Evaluation of Patients with Rheumatic Diseases." The Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine, Vol. 4, No. 2, 194-200.

Padron, J. L., S. C. Smith and H. H. Ramsey, (1954) "Chloramphenicol Resistance in *Micrococcus Pyogenes* II. Intermediary Metabolism of Sensitive and Resistant Strains." Proc. Soc. Exptl. Biol. Med.

Ramsey, H. H. and J. L. Padron, (1954) "Altered Growth Requirements Accompanying Chloramphenicol Resistance in *Micrococcus Pyogenes* Var. *Aureus*." Antibiotics and Chemotherapy, Vol. 4, 537-545.

#### **Appendix 4: Credits from Colleagues and Family**

**STEPHEN H. GOOD, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean, Drury University:** Dr. Jorge Padron interviewed me during my candidacy, and it was clear from that moment that he was going to be the most gracious and supportive colleague for his successor in the Dean's office. After I had been in office for only a short while, it became clear that the continued fine reputation of Drury (as the finest liberal arts college in the region) was due to the work and commitment of Dr. Padron. In his time as Dean and Acting President he had maintained the traditions, often in very difficult times. Drury is indebted to his clarity of purpose and fine leadership.

When your predecessor stays at the college, it is often awkward or worse. Not in this case with Dr. Padron. As a colleague and mentor for me, he promised to return to the classroom and lab and to stay out of campus politics. He was true to his word. He made himself available to help me whenever I sought information or advice, and he occasionally provided encouragement. In the early years of my tenure at Drury, I received notes from Dr. Padron in February. He would note that February was a difficult time in the Dean's office (the time of salary, promotion, tenure decisions), and his thoughts were with me.

On one occasion when a senior faculty member was causing a stir about the new curriculum agenda (a faculty member with whom Dr. Padron had worked for decades), he dropped me a note to say, "you should give Professor XXXX more to do, he seems to have time on his hands." In his genial and supportive way, he was the best colleague one could ask for.

**DONALD DEEDS, Professor of Biology, Drury University:** Dr. Jorge Padron has been my most important role model and mentor. It is because of him that I was motivated to become a college professor. Much of the professional success that I have achieved as a faculty member is the direct result of his encouragement and inspiration.

As a junior biology major I saw organic chemistry as a necessary evil for completion of my major. Dr. Padron dramatically changed my opinion. The two chemistry classes I took with him were the best classes that I ever encountered, or would ever encounter in my continued graduate studies. Dr. Padron's teaching style was so passionate that it could have roused the dead.

Later in graduate school it was obvious that I was the best prepared biochemist in the entire class. My friends from Drury going to other graduate and medical schools tell exactly the same story. For all of us, Dr. Padron was our hero. We knew that we had the opportunity to learn from the best.

**ROBERT PENNINGTON, Professor of Music, West Chester University:** At Drury in 1958 I found in the chemistry department someone equally young and equally ambitious. Involved in research (dedicated to research would be more exact) Jorge brought a Latin look at middle America. I remember much later visiting St. John's Hospital where Jorge laid in the intensive care unit and what he said before undergoing bypass surgery. Already visited by a Baptist minister and a rabbi, he was next approached by a Catholic priest wanting to know if he wished a prayer said for his recovery. His answer was typical, "Father, I need all the help I can get."

Men with pursed lips, waitresses who brought over-sized desserts to the table, and humans engaged in unseemly behavior on the streets ("puerco") were observed with withering Latin humor. But his loyalty to the competent could withstand anything.

Birthday parties at the Batista's, crowded bus rides in Havana, stories of posadas -- Jorge's tales of a vanished Cuban life restored balance to our workday existence in Springfield. A ring from Ruben Batista, or a word such as piropo served as the starting point of a fascinating narrative. Woven into our existence was dedication to our professions and into our friendship, a never-failing sense of humor. It was an era that came to an end when I flew east for an interview and audition for what was to become my new job. But as Professor Rockwell once said, "I can live on the memories"

**PHILLIP PADRON:** There are so many grand, wonderful memories that I have of my childhood that to attempt to recall, even the best, would be impossible. But a few of my cherished recollections of time with "Pops," would be my Saturday afternoons as a five-year old at his lab at Drury helping in small ways in diabetic research, playing baseball with him and Charles in the backyard, and spending weekends at the lake at the cabin. My most trying time with him would have to be having him as my instructor in chemistry class. But these are memories of being *with* him. What I will always carry with me as a reminder to me of how one lives out the entirety of one's life (probably his greatest gift to me), would be the authentic, classy manner that he brought to bear on all aspects of his own life.

**CHARLES PADRON:** His ring, perhaps his most sentimental material possession, straddles the ring finger of my left hand; his Roman prints, which once hung on his office walls, now hang on mine. His listening ear can ascertain my well-being (or opposite) on hearing my voice for just a few seconds, while his voice can comfort me with a simple greeting of "hello, mi hijo" like nothing in my existence can. Without a trace of artifice or exaggeration, I think of my father in terms of continuity, above all. I think I understand what Nietzsche meant when he wrote in his autobiography that, in his early forties, he understood himself as "merely my father once more and as it were a continuation of his life." I am grateful for having lived long enough to realize this.

**ANNE SMID:** My father, Jorge Luis Padrón, has always been and will always be one of the two true loves of my life. My husband, David, being the other. His intense love for me I feel in every waking moment of my life. His brilliant, forceful, yet gentle spirit, along with a voracious appetite for knowledge and experience, continue to influence my life even today. I have a great admiration and respect for his ability to analyze quickly, and then deal with all situations that he finds himself in. His Latin wit never allows for a dull moment or boredom. What an incredible role model he has always been.

**ANTHONY PADRON:** Ever since I can remember I have loved my Abuelo more than anyone could imagine. If I ever needed a ride from school, the first person to volunteer would be Abuelo. I do as many things as I can with him, whether its going to the art gallery or going to the train store. We even made a deal that if he went with me to see a movie of my choice then I would have to see something he wants to. Taking me to see the “The Lord of the Rings” and not falling asleep during it must mean he loves me a lot. I have a lot of great memories with him like fishing in Florida. I’ll love him when he’s gone and longer. Like I used to say, “I love you to the moon and back fifty times.”

**GALE BOUTWELL, Story Keeper:** Between the years of 1973 and 1982, Dr. Jorge Padron selected and hired countless faculty and staff members for Drury, most of whom would say that being part of the Drury community benefited them and their families in a truly incredible way. Dean Padron built the ramp to Drury’s future by placing so many wonderful, talented people on the pathway and mentoring them on their way up. I consider myself fortunate and blessed to be part of the group who experienced this period of Drury history. Long before Jorge Padron retired, I knew that he was not only a brilliant professional but an individual with a wide view and an incredible soul. Even the Latin charm, so instantly appearing and vibrantly applied, is overshadowed by the depth of Jorge’s wisdom, kindness and love. Love of learning, love of family, love of work, love of life. His is a life shaped by love, guided by love, and given to many, with love.





[jnmaul@juno.com](mailto:jnmaul@juno.com)

All Rights Reserved  
Ethnic Life Stories Project

<http://thelibrary.springfield.missouri.org/lochist/els/menu.cfm>