

I met Jose Luis Ochoa in July 1984 at the 12th International Carbohydrate Symposium in Utrecht, The Netherlands after my presentation, where he asked me questions during the discussion. After the end of the session, I met him and was very much surprised by this young handsome scientist who proposed very nice ideas for cooperation. But the most important aspect, which I will keep in my mind, is his love for Israel and me. He immediately told me that he will invite me to Mexico and from this moment, I am his Israeli sister. At that time, I was working in South Africa for 3 years at the University and represented at the Conference South Africa. I had finished my duties there and returned to my tenured position at the Hebrew University. It was the beginning of 1985. I was very sad because after many years, I returned to an empty office without any grants and started everything from scratch. Suddenly, there was a telephone call from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about my visit to the International Conference "Use and Preservation of Biological Resources in Marine Environments in Arid Zones", April, 1985, La Paz, Mexico. This conference was entirely organized by Jose Luis Ochoa. When we met there, he gave me his personal credit card and told me that he wants to treat me as a Queen. Of course, I did not spend a penny, but I will never forget this. Then, the next year, I invited him to visit my laboratory at the University in Israel. He spent some time working on the bench as a young biochemist in the separation of proteins from seven species of Cactaceae and we published our first paper in 1995, then the second in 1999. In Israel, everybody in our department liked him very much. At the end of his 2-month visit, we organized with him a special Conference-lunch to report the results of his investigation where he met his lovely son David with his ex-wife, who came from Sweden. He was very kind to the Israelis. Then I visited for many times his institute (CIBNOR, Mexico) and acted there as "UNITED NATIONS" making peace between scientists. We worked with JL on many subjects: Mexican beer stability, phytoplankton, citrus fruits, and other subjects.

I keep all our correspondence and I want to share a few of them. This was his reaction on my scientific award from the President of Poland:
You can see that he called me a UN-Ambassador!!!

Date: Sat, 12 Mar 2005 09:58:47 -0700
From: "Jose Luis Ochoa" <jlochoa@cibnor.mx>
To: gorin@cc.huji.ac.il
Subject: Re: AWARD!!!!

Dear Shela,
what a nice news!!! I am so happy for your achievements and recognition. Is all well deserved. A lifetime struggle for science bringing people together and establishing collaborations with so many people, is something that only a "UN-Ambassador" could do. I wonder, did you ever dream about it? did you do it in purpose? Most certainly not, because you are such a kind of wonder person that puts always everybody else before your own good. I share with you the joy and glory. Please forwards my best regard to Arcady, without whom you might probably never have had the chance to climb so high.
All my love!! Jose Luis

We were in touch all the time and even in his last years we wanted to submit a grant proposal, not because I needed this, but because I knew that he is very much isolated at CIBNOR. Therefore, it was very important for me to support him.

See the message:

Date: Wed, 26 Apr 2006 11:20:27 -0600
From: "Jose Luis Ochoa" <jlochoa@cibnor.mx>
To: gorin@cc.huji.ac.il
Subject: Re: Fwd: You are known everywhere

Dear Shela,

I appreciate your message and consideration to participate in a publication regarding citrus antioxidants; we keep working on the subject of citrus post-harvest diseases and might be able to contribute in a positive manner. Let me know about your idea in more detail.

With regard your visit; it occurs to me that we might try to arrange a binational workshop Israel-Mexico and try to get involved 3-4 speakers from each country with experience in Citrus cultivation, processing and uses. Hence, we could seek for some funding that could allow us to meet again.

One very active person working with Citrus in Israel is Prof. Droby, perhaps you can establish contact with him and explore further this idea.

Love,
Jose Luis

The saddest was the last message I received from him:

Date: Fri, 10 Aug 2007 12:14:55 -0600
From: "Jose Luis Ochoa" <jlochoa@cibnor.mx>
To: gorin@cc.huji.ac.il
Subject: Re: contact

Dear shela,

I regret to tell you that I have not been in good health for sometime and right now I have serious problems with my eyesight.

I will have to retire.

Any way, please keep in touch.

Jose Luis

He was always very generous to me. Until now I keep his beautiful gifts, such as bag, necklaces of leather, a big shawl, a turtle for luck. He never neglected our relationship.

I can write a lot of my memories, but the most important is that he was my friend and he will remain as such forever,

Shela Gorinstein
The Institute for Drug Research
School of Pharmacy
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