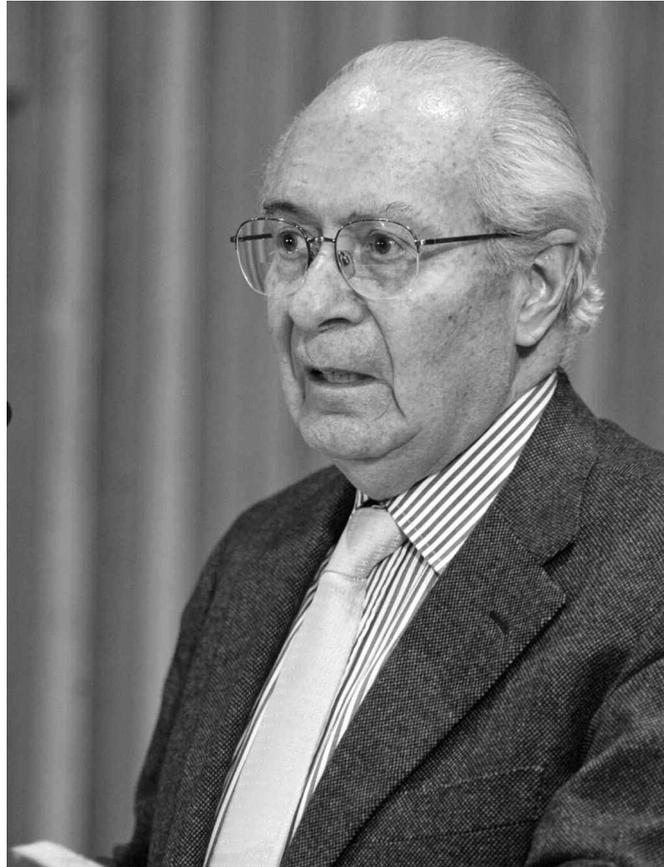


# Pablo Latapí Sarre

## Sketch of an Educator

### (1927-2009)

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DCCS-UNAM Photography Department

Pablo Latapí Sarre (Mexico City, 1927-2009) had a full professional life, committed and productive in several areas: intellectually, he pioneered educational research; he promoted institutions and networks; as a teacher, he educated researchers; he was fascinated by the links between educational research, public policy design and decision making; and he was a national and international disseminator of knowledge.

With his solid intellectual discipline, training in the humanities and philosophy and social and ethical commitment, from the early 1960s, Pablo Latapí promoted opening up a new field of research in education. He conceived of this as the crossroads of many disciplines, demanding conceptual, analytical and methodological rigor. His perseverant, productive research work engendered more than 35 books and 100 specialized articles.

He untiringly promoted institutions and initiatives that contributed to maturing the field of educational research and colleagues' specialization. In 1963, he

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founded the first institution dedicated to this field, the Center for Educational Studies (CEE), which he headed until 1973. This was followed by the creation or promotion of *La Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos* (Latin American Journal of Educational Studies);<sup>1</sup> the civil society organizations Educational Information Meetings, University Prospective and Mexican Association for the United Nations; the Mexican Council for Educational Research (Comie), and its national congresses; and the Citizens' Observatory for Education (OCE).

He also spent time exploring the impact of educational research on public policy design. He was an active, critical witness of national educational development, working as an advisor under four different ministers of public education (Fernando Solana, José Ángel Pescador, Miguel Limón and Reyes Tamez Guerra).

His research activities were accompanied by intense activities to disseminate information and knowledge, first in the daily newspaper *Excelsior* and later in the news weekly *Proceso*, as well as on radio and television. In these efforts, he combined academic knowledge, political savvy, perceptiveness and a civic position to contribute critical, well-documented points of view about educational development. His aim was always to defend and improve public education and seriously analyze the gap between rhetoric and reality in education.

He was also very active in congresses and seminars nationwide and throughout Latin America, Asia, Africa (Zaire and Kenya), the United States, Canada and Europe. He participated in different initiatives, offering consulting services to the Ford, Rockefeller and Inter-American Foundations, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), UNICEF and the UNESCO, where he was Mexico's ambassador from 2005 to 2006.

One thing stands out in all his work: a concern for examining and dealing with the inequalities in Mexican society from a profoundly humanist point of view, unhampered by political ties, with conceptual and methodological rigor and convinced of the transformational capability of education.

All his achievements brought him a large number of prizes and honors: from 1985 on, he was a level-three member of the National System of Researchers; he was named researcher emeritus in 1996 and national

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researcher of excellence in 2003. He received the UNESCO and Czech Republic's Comenius Medal for his contributions to the quality of education in 2001; the Mexican government's 1996 National Prize for Science and the Arts in the area of history, social sciences and philosophy; the University of Colima named him Distinguished University Professor (1996) and gave him an honorary doctorate (2008). He also received honorary doctorates from the Autonomous University of Sonora (2002), the Autonomous Metropolitan University (2007) and the National Polytechnic Institute's Center for Advanced Research and Studies (CINVESTAV) (2009); the University of Veracruz's Medal of Merit (2003); and Special Recognition from El Colegio de México (2007).

He came on board at the UNAM's Institute for Research on Education and the University (IISUE, previously known as the Center for University Studies) in 1995. He donated his personal archives to this institute, his last home in his tenacious, brilliant academic career, so that the UNAM's Historic Archives could protect them and make them available for researchers to use.

The IISUE has announced the establishment of the Pablo Latapí Sarre Educational Research Award, for which a call will soon go out for candidates. The aim of this award is to promote and foster educational research nationwide and to honor Don Pablo's memory and legacy.

To further honor his work, we must work rigorously to continue opening up fields of inquiry and action in education, seeking equity and justice in solidarity with the dispossessed majorities, taking on ethical responsibilities in the transformation of education and society. That is what Pablo Latapí Sarre did. **■**

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In 1971, it was originally called *Revista del Centro de Estudios Educativos* (Journal of the Center for Educational Studies).