

In Memoriam Carlos Alvarado, 1955-2021

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Carlos Salvador Alvarado was one of the most active parapsychologists of his generation. He was twice elected President of the Parapsychological Association (PA). He was involved in editorial capacities with several journals and published extensively on topics ranging from out-of-body experiences to the historical connections between psychical research, psychology, and psychiatry. He worked to bring works in other languages to the attention of the English-speaking world and to enhance education in the field. Carlos also was a good personal friend. His premature passing – he was only 66 when he succumbed to glioblastoma, an aggressive brain cancer – is a loss to all of us, but inasmuch as he was a few months younger than I am, I feel...I it especially keenly.

Carlos was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on March 9, 1955. His Puerto Rican father was pursuing a Ph.D. in urban planning at Harvard University, but left the program when he was called back to the island to take up a government position there. Carlos grew up in Puerto Rico and majored in psychology at the University of Puerto Rico. After completing his B.A. in 1978, he returned to the U. S. mainland. He was awarded an M.Sc. in parapsychology by John F. Kennedy University in 1981, an M.A. in history (with a specialization in the history of science and medicine) by Duke University in 1989, and a Ph.D. in psychology by the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1997.

After completing his M.Sc. degree under John Palmer at J.F.K., Carlos went to work as a Research Assistant to Ian Stevenson at the University of Virginia. He was with Stevenson from September, 1982, to May, 1986, when he left for Durham, North Carolina, to do graduate studies in history at Duke. Originally intending to obtain his Ph.D. from Duke, Carlos left with his M.A. and switched to psychology at Edinburgh for his doctorate.

In January, 1990, Carlos married Nancy Zingrone. Carlos and Nancy went together to Edinburgh, where they spent a year in residence, then travelled to Puerto Rico, where they stayed until July, 2000. They were consultants to the Parapsychology Foundation (PF) from November, 1998, through June, 2000, and on-site employees at the PF headquarters in New York City from July, 2000, through February, 2003, when they relocated to Charlottesville, Virginia. From then until April, 2008, they ran the PF's virtual office out of Charlottesville, Carlos continuing in his role of Chairman of Domestic and International Programs.

Carlos also held an appointment as Assistant Professor of Research in Psychiatric Medicine at the Division of Perceptual Studies of UVA's Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences for several years beginning in March, 2003. In May, 2010, Nancy was hired as Director of Academic and Administrative Affairs and Carlos as Scholar in Residence at Atlantic University (AU) in Virginia Beach. When the AU staff was downsized in January, 2013, Carlos and Nancy left Virginia Beach for Chapel Hill and then Carrboro, North Carolina, where they resided for Carlos's remaining years.

Throughout this series of moves, Carlos was engaged professionally with parapsychology in sundry ways. His contributions were so extensive that highlights only can be given here; for a more detailed accounting, see his curriculum vitae (<https://theazire.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Alvarado-CV.pdf>). From 1985 to 1995 he was a Voting Member of the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR). From 1995 to 1998, he was President of the Asociación Iberoamericana de Parapsicología. He was elected to the PA Board of Directors for periods throughout the 1990s and the first decade of the present century, serving as President in 1995 and again for the 2002-3 term.

Carlos held editorial positions with several journals. He was an Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Parapsychology* from 1999 to 2001, Associate Editor of the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* from 2009 to 2020, and Book Review Editor of the *Journal of Parapsychology* from 2017 to 2020. Additionally, he was a member of editorial boards of the *Revista Argentina de Psicología Paranormal*, the *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, and the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*.

Carlos was deeply involved in education and training in parapsychology. In 2009, he and Nancy established the Alvarado Zingrone Institute for Research and Education (The AZIRE), to act as a clearing house for information about the field and a central hub for their educational activities. From 2015 through 2020, The AZIRE sponsored a free MOOC (massive open online course) entitled "Parapsychology Research and Education" on the WizIQ teaching platform, for which many other professionals provided lectures and materials. The AZIRE also hosts courses on the Moodle platform and has an ongoing presence in Second Life and the Parapsychology Online YouTube channel.

Carlos conducted his own research, often in association with Nancy. They were awarded two BIAL grants for to compare postal surveys in Virginia to web-based surveys of mystical, dream, and psychic experiences.

Carlos was one of the most prolific writers in parapsychology. He authored only one book, *Charles Richet: A Nobel Prize Winning Scientist's Exploration of Psychic Phenomena* (Alvarado, 2019), but has to his credit hundreds of papers in both disciplinary and mainstream journals, beginning from before he came to the U. S. mainland in 1978. His research interests centered on dissociative, anomalous, and exceptional experiences, especially in the history of psychical research and allied fields. He currently has 20 articles in the online *Psi Encyclopedia*, with two more pieces due to be published soon. Additionally, he authored a blog, "Parapsychology: News, History, Research" (carlossalvarado.wordpress.com/), which Nancy plans to keep updated. The most recent entry, posted by Nancy on July 20, 2021, announced Carlos's passing four days earlier.

I met Carlos in 1986 in the fourth-floor archives of the ASPR, which we happened to be visiting at the same time. I had previously contacted him by telephone, having been referred to him by Howard

Zimmerman, then Executive Secretary of the PA, as someone who shared my interests in postmortem survival and the history of parapsychology. Carlos became my mentor, reading over each of my early papers before I submitted them for publication. Our paths crossed many times over the ensuing years. I last saw him shortly before his death, when his chemotherapy treatments had been halted and he was in home hospice under Nancy's care. He smiled when I promised that we would get his final contributions to the *Psi Encyclopedia* edited and online.

Carlos was the recipient of the Harold and Sherry Crasilneck Award for Best First Paper on Hypnosis published in the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis* in 2010. He received the PA's Outstanding Contribution Award in 2010 and its Outstanding Career Award in 2017.

For more about Carlos's life and work, see The AZIRE website (<https://theazire.org/carlos-s-alvarado-biography/>) and his *Psi Encyclopedia* biography (Duggan & Matlock, 2021). His personal papers have been deposited in the Special Collections department of the University of West Georgia, which has a growing list of materials related to the study of human consciousness and parapsychology.

References

- Alvarado, C. S. (2019). Charles Richet: A Nobel Prize winning scientist's exploration of psychic phenomena. White Crow Books.
- Duggan, M., & Matlock, J. G. (2021, August 1). Carlos S Alvarado. *Psi Encyclopedia*. <https://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/articles/carlos-s-alvarado>