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## A LIFE, A STORY, A NURSE: SIDÊNIA ALVES SIDRIÃO DE ALENCAR MENDES

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### ABSTRACT

The nursing profession embodies and upholds the commitment to an activity aimed at life, without losing the policy as an essential element of this profession. This article captures part of the construction of the trajectory of an activist nurse who contributes to the formation of Brazilian nursing: the teacher Sidênia Alves Sidrião de Alencar Mendes. In a narrative form, the text aims, through the story of the teacher, to register an important part of training and ways to working in this profession in Brazil.

**Keywords:** History, Memory; Nursing.

### INTRODUCTION

The School of Nursing Aurora de Afonso Costa, Fluminense Federal University is marked by the personality of women who are strong, fair, ethical and committed to practice centered on

the person, on the user, as the teacher Aurora Afonso Costa, founder of the School which she has maintained with great delicacy and strength and the dream of educating and training girls in Fluminense territory, to pursue a new profession that has as an object of its actions the body. It is a dream in an era of strict morals, of a patriarchal society, of a reality that reveals the social commitment and solidarity. Principles on which the EEAAC / UFF bases its formation.

These elements organize themselves and shape the present practice, added to many features of women, like the teacher Aurora that mark the identity and build the mood of belonging to EEAAC.

In this article we present a short history of one of these women. Sidênia Alves Sidrião de Alencar Mendes, teacher, assistant chief of department, coordinator of the undergraduate course (for two consecutive terms), vice director of the Center for Medical Sciences, Director (for two consecutive terms) of EEAAC, vice chairman of Education of ABEn national, president of the Brazilian Nursing Association (Section Niterói) and adviser to the Regional Nursing Council of Rio de Janeiro.

## **THE STARTING PATH IN MOMBAÇA**

The teacher Sidênia Alves Sidrião de Alencar Mendes was born in a political family in Mombaça, a small town in Ceará, in a family of many children, uncles and cousins, with great affection and under the tutelage of a father attentive to ethics, solidarity and social justice. Aspects that she began to exert at an early age. As every strict northeastern father, Mr. Francisco would not let his beloved daughter travel, but the exchange of letters was permissible and this way she got to know the "world". She made lots and lots of friends that are cultivated until today. She knows several cities, regions and promotes many meetings. With the experience of exchanging letters she has developed the ability to sensitively listen to people.

It was through her grandmother, a very knowledgeable teacher, that she discovered the story of Florence Nigthingale and Anna Nery. So she falls in love for the profession and the books about the history of nursing that she would devour to the astonishment of her teachers.

## **THE UNIVERSITY**

The commitment to a model of fair and caring society, that he learned very early in her family is taken to the School of Nursing, in Fortaleza. Far from her dearest Mombaça baby, she started to put into practice what she saw, heard and lived with her family which she loved.

At college, as a good northeastern, she started to imprint in her formation her own destiny. She would take part in discussions about a more just society, actively participated of the student movement and, while in doubt between going to a sportive tournament and doing a content test, she decides for the tournament, since in this space she would have the opportunity of gathering several colleagues and students and they would certainly engage in a political debate. Therefore, as a born idealist, she marks and is marked by the will of doing a policy different, inclusive, with the participation of the collective, which is something that the university offers, but that sometimes is not understood as an element of formation. Sidênia, building her own training curriculum, creates and exercises this facet of nursing education which later will be a cornerstone of her political activism in the profession.

## THE WAY IN NITERÓI

At the end of the undergraduate course in Fortaleza arises the opportunity for moving to Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, to accomplish Nursing Home. The agreement with her father that she would return to Mombaça as soon as she graduated in nursing vanishes, marked by her "genetic restlessness," so she comes to Niterói. The novelties are many: New City, new people, opportunity to make new relationships. She gets in Professor Vanda Rodrigues de Oliveira not only a counselor, but also a friend and partner of many moments. This Professor introduces her to the football team Flamengo, a passion she shared with her beloved Ceará Football Club. Many were the visits to Maracana in Rio de Janeiro, with Miss Vanda, to cheer for her dear Flamengo. In the middle of the vast crowd of fans she was renewed.

At the University Hospital Antônio Pedro, Fluminense Federal University, where she performs Nursing Residency, she makes new friends and begins to write and make a difference in care. At the end of the Residency she is invited to hold the position of substitute teacher in the discipline of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases (IPD) at the School of Nursing, UFF, starting to articulate what she learned in Mombaça with the scientific and technical knowledge of nursing and political activism. The combination of these three elements becomes the hallmark of scientific work and production of teacher Sidênia.

After being a substitute teacher she passes to the permanent staff of University space and creates a respected teaching space with the Department of Infectious Parasitic Diseases of the University Hospital Antônio Pedro.

## **THE WAY THROUGH POSTGRADUATION**

In São Paulo she carries out the Specialization Course in the Department of Nursing, School of Medicine, and as she was always very passionate about educational practices, she searches, also in São Paulo, a Masters in Education at the Pontifical Catholic University when she has the great educator Paulo Freire as her teacher and dissertation director. With him she expands her ability of listening and collective making, always guided by the justice and commitment to the public and social. With him, she has the opportunity to further develop those ideas brought from Mombaça that everyone has knowledge and is capable of rebuilding them on a daily basis; different knowledge that produces new knowledge.

## **THE POLITICAL ACTIVISM AS A GUIDANCE TO TEACHING AND ASSISTENTIAL PRACTICES**

Living in Sao Paulo also produces a new and beautiful change in her life. The city becomes the place of encounter with the love of her life, Professor Carlos Alberto Mendes. With him she fights in the Brazilian Nursing Association (ABEn), São Paulo Section, for ethics in the profession and a solid training in nursing committed to the social. The involvement with ABEn is differentiated. The political dispute and healthy democracy is made by the stirring of marches, flags, speeches and the production of many new friendships, friends who take part in the dynamics of the "Participation Movement." This one stirs Brazil, takes shape and echoes from north to south in this country of continental proportions. It renews and strengthens the oldest and most important association of the profession; a space where one learns that the exercise of citizenship is part of the exercise of being a nurse.

Sidênia marks and is marked by her participation in National-ABEn. It is an experience that she brings in her baggage into the University for the Undergraduate Nursing Course at UFF. She goes around with other teachers, making new partnerships and intense friendships. On graduation, centered in the line of Paulo Freire, who is a teacher and always a friend, she proposes to reformulate the nursing

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curriculum guiding the training of nurses in the health needs of the population. For her, nursing has been and will always be a social practice based on scientific principles. In an interview with COREN-RJ she says: "I'm individually accomplished, but not collectively, because I only believe in social achievement if we engage ourselves in struggles for the process of construction of a democratic practice of nursing and health, dedicated to the qualification of professionals committed with social changes. A practice committed to the change in health services, transformative, resulting in quality health care. "

Sidênia lives intensely the Brazilian Sanitary Reform movement. She participated in many discussions about the process of construction of the Unified Health System (SUS) proposed for Brazil and also about the importance of changing the process of formation of health professionals and nurses in particular. The movement for national curriculum changes that is led by ABEn-National at the School of Nursing of UFF gains echo with workshops and discussions on broad profile of the nurse to be formed. Sidênia, elected Coordinator of the Undergraduate Course for two consecutive terms, makes a difference in nursing in Rio de Janeiro. In a broad process of collective construction she implements an innovative curriculum in the School of Nursing Aurora de Afonso Costa. Given her importance as an educator, researcher, coordinator of the Undergraduate Course, member of the Education Commission of ABEn-National, President of ABEn-Niterói, Counselor of COREN-RJ, among others, was elected director of the School of Nursing of UFF for two consecutive terms. She performs managements marked by the projection of the school in the national and international scenario. She supports, unconditionally, the expansion of research projects and extension and the number of specialization courses and masters at the school. She imprints a collective administration that marks in an indelible fashion her passing by the institution.

The political life of the academic Sidênia is restless and incessant in the Association of Teachers of Fluminense Federal University (ADUFF), in the National Union of Teachers (ANDES) and in different forums of the university. Known for her integrity in politics she is respected by the segments of students, teachers and technical-administrative staff of the University. Such a quality has its origins in her childhood and in parental practice in Mombaça, as she acknowledges.

As a grandmother she is an excellent mother. Her grandchildren Lucas, Luiza and Talita know well the comfort of limit and love of the relationship that is born from the conversations, the scoldings and affection for her.

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In the movement of rescue of the Regional Nursing Council of Rio de Janeiro (RJ-COREN), she did not avoid the debate. She recognizes the importance of discussing, of making democracy be in fact a right of the nurse in the state of Rio de Janeiro, even at the risk that this option offers.

As a very good friend she is, she knows the value of the word friendship. She recognizes the differences and grows with them. Recognizing her mistakes and trying to fix them is a practice respected and admired by all those who are close by. This element is recognized by all Board members of the Council of Fluminense Federal University. She is a person who goes around marking her position with confidence and docility among the different groups at the University.

## **OPENING OTHER PATHS**

The risk is always present; it is inseparable from the dynamics of life choices that Sidênia has produced throughout life. In this movement it was elaborated some rich and intense territory of hardship, many achievements and through the production of dynamic nursing.

Multiple Sidênia: woman, daughter, nurse, student, grandmother, teacher, always and forever committed to life, to health, to nursing, and especially to social justice.

Elements she rediscovers every day and imprints in the students of the School of Nursing Aurora de Afonso Costa the taste: the ethics, the commitment and the joy of being a nurse.