

2008 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: JUAN ALMENDARES, M.S., M.D.



Dr. Juan Almendares Bonilla is an internationally known Honduran medical doctor, human rights activist, environmental leader and alternative medicine practitioner. He also holds a medical degree from the University of Honduras and the M.S. in physiology from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. He is recognized for his work in combating alcoholism, tobacco and drug abuse, malnutrition, ecological damage, and pesticide poisoning in Honduras.

Dr. Almendares has received international recognition for his humanitarian efforts in Honduras and Central America. **He received the 2001 Barbara Chester**

Award for his groundbreaking efforts with prisoners, victims of torture, the poor, and indigenous populations. In 2007 Dr. Almendares was the sole recipient of the Humanitarian Award from InterAction in Washington DC. He has publicly addressed the impact and effects of mining on the Central American environment and people, and has devoted considerable effort to reducing the prevalence of violence against women. A torture survivor himself, Dr. Almendares has been targeted by death squads on several occasions in the past.

Dr. Almendares is the former Dean of the Medical School and subsequently Rector of the Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH). In the fall of 1997, he was the Tinker Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison WI. He has been a guest teacher at the Open School in Manhattan on topics such as herbal healing and blending Central American traditions with modern medicine, and was an invited participant at workshops conducted by former Advocacy Institute in Washington DC, and the Center for Health and Global Environment at Harvard. In 2004 he was awarded an honorary doctor of letters degree from the UNAH. That year the WHO also recognized him for his efforts on tobacco control in Honduras (see www.Enableinternational.com for further information on Dr. Almendares' relation with several of the above organizations).

In addition to the above, Dr. Juan Almendares' work and accomplishments include:

- President of the Honduran Peace Committee as well as the past Secretary of the Coordinating Committee of Popular Organizations
- Co-founder of the Honduras Academy of Sciences
- Former President of the Honduran National Commission for Tobacco Control
- Founding Member of the BioEthics Society in Honduras
- Representative of the Secretary for the Environment before the United Nations on pesticides
- Co-founder of Movimiento Tierra Madre, an associate of Friends of the Earth International

- Director of the Honduran Health Exchange (HHE), a humanitarian organization and clinic that provides free health services to barrios, and trains health promoters to work in urban and rural areas (through HHE, Dr. Almdares and his volunteers provide free medical care each month to hundreds of people from poor marginalized communities)
- Dr. Almdares has written poems, short stories, and ecological and scientific articles, many published in the Honduran press. In addition, he has two books: “Tobacco and Health” and “Land, Life and Hope”, about alternative medicine
- In 2003 Dr. Almdares received Honduras’ highest journalism award from his peers
- Dr. Almdares has one book of his poems currently being published, and is working on three other books--one of stories, one about alternative therapies for survivors of torture, and the fourth about health and ecology

For those who have heard this gentle, compassionate man speak frankly about the reality of Honduras as he insists on speaking out in favor of of peace and self-determination for the people of Honduras and sharing his insight and knowledge about alternative medical practices, he is rarely forgotten.

“This hungry, malnourished nation exports meat to the U.S. while the cows in Honduras are better fed than the children. How can I, as a doctor, remain silent?”

“Unless violence against women stops, nothing else in Honduras will change. To continue this violence has the same effect as an organism destroying itself.”

“Many intellectuals are illiterate when it comes to social issues. We must become humble and learn from the people in the streets how to struggle for peace, and how to live with death.”

“The greatest challenge of my life has been to declare in the academic world my affinity for the world of shamans and alternative medicine.”

---DR. JUAN ALMDARES



The following is a list of suggested topics related to healthcare, alternative medicine and human rights in Latin America, for Dr. Juan Almdares' speaking events when he visits the United States. These are only suggestions - If you interested in having an open forum or desire Dr. Almdares to speak on a topic not listed here please ask at www.enableinternational.com.

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

- !The Politics of Life, Death, and Health Policies
- !Ethics and Human Rights
- !Human Rights: Torture
- !Human Rights: Organized Violence Against Peasants and Indigenous People
- !An Overview Of Dr. Almdares' Work at the Center He Started in Honduras to Treat Victims of Torture and Their Families
- !Dr. Almdares' Work in The Prisons of Honduras

CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE & JUSTICE ISSUES

- !The Role of Women In Organizing the Communities of the Poor Barrios
- !The Dangers of Demonstrating for Justice
- !Health Care Brigades and the work of the Honduran Health Exchange
- !The Effect of US Policy on Poverty In Honduras and Latin America

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- !Tobacco, Multinational Corporations, and Illness
- !Wood Smoke, Deforestation, and Ill Health of the Honduran Family
- !Mining Companies in Honduras
- !The Grave Ecological Situation Honduras Faces

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

- !Allopathic, Alternative, and Traditional Medical Models
- !The Effects of Love, Violence, and Social Consciousness on Health
- !The Cultural Body: Health, Disease and Therapy from a Cultural Viewpoint
- !How Central American Folk Healers (Curanderos) Treat Illnesses
- !The Bridge Between Science, Medicine, and the Healing of Shamans and Curanderos
- !Healing With Herbs and Foods

Donations and honoraria for Dr. Almdares can be made to Enable International, Inc., a voluntary, not-for-profit organization. 100% of funds raised go to support Dr. Almdares' work and projects.

See website for **Enable International** (www.enableinternational.com)

or contact

Dr. Michael A. Collins, president (mcollin@lumc.edu)