

Dr. José Molina Cotto's legacy ^[1]

Submitted by [Josefina Arce](#) ^[2] on 6 October 2023 - 3:07pm



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We publish this note to celebrate and share the memory and contributions of Dr. José Molina Cotto, a member of our #CienciaBoricua community, who passed away recently. We thank Dr. Josefina Arce for her companionship and authorship.

Dr. José Molina Cotto, born on August 28, 1958, in the beautiful town of Aibonito and raised in the city of Fog, Cayey, Puerto Rico, was a fundamental figure in the University of UPR-Cayey.

Molina did his undergraduate studies in the Biology Department, of what was then known as the University College of Cayey, from 1976 to 1980. During his years as a student, he actively participated in student organizations such as the Biology Honorary Society, where he left an everlasting impact. He was also part of the ROTC, where his dedication and commitment earned him two notable awards: one as Cadet Top Military Science and the other as Excellent in Military History.

After graduating, he returned to his alma mater to work as a lab technician in the Biology Department until 1985. That year his passion for biology led him to pursue graduate studies at Texas A & I University in Kingsville and eventually earn a PhD in Biochemistry from Wayne State University in Michigan in 1994.

In the same year, Dr. Molina began his academic career in the Department of Pathology at the Medical Sciences Campus. However, his love for his Alma Mater brought him back to UPR Cayey as Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology, where he introduced his beloved Cellular

Biochemistry course.

Molina excelled as a mentor of three important student organizations, the Biology Honorary Society (BBB), the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), and the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Through these organizations, he went on numerous field trips, participated in national conventions, and guided young people on their paths to success.

On the administrative side, Molina served in a variety of roles, from coordinator of institutional committees to director, dean, and rector. He was always an exemplary leader, marked by his deep sense of responsibility and righteousness. He taught us by example to treat the entire university community with equality and respect, calling everyone "jefe or jefa" (boss in English).

In recognition of his outstanding legacy and institutional commitment, Dr. Molina was honored in 2022 with the Rector's Medal, a testament to his unwavering dedication to our UPR.

Today, we remember José Molina as an exemplary leader, professor, researcher, colleague, and friend. His philosophy of life, encapsulated in his famous phrase, "It is better to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission," urges us to take the initiative, to be bold, and to fight for what we believe in.

Rest in peace, dear colleague and friend. **Your legacy will live on forever.**

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