The first time I saw Paul Terasaki was in 1994 at the Pittsburgh ASHI meeting. A very discreet figure, small, with a very simple air but always with people around him. My shyness did not let me approach him on this occasion.

A year or two later he came to Brazil for a conference at the Brazilian Transplantation Society. This time there was no excuse and I introduce myself to him. Since the first "Hi Dr. Terasaki, to the Hi Paul" were a few months. He did not put himself above anyone, listened intently and gave attention to everybody.

The discussion about the role of the antibodies in the post-transplant was sort of dormant but was slowly coming back. We here at Santa Casa Hospital in Porto Alegre, Southern Brazil, very modestly, published in 1994 and 1995 a small sample showing the harmful effects of anti-donor antibodies produced in the post-transplant. I personally felt the resistance that these data suffered from devotees of the unique role of cells as cause of rejection, particularly among Europeans.

And then it was like Paul Terasaki was taking the helm again. He organized in the second half of the 90s a huge multicenter data collection from transplant patients looking for the presence or absence of anti-HLA antibodies post-transplantation.

The data that he began to publish were impressive. It was being proved that the antibodies were so important not only in the pre, but also - and a lot - in the post-transplant period. This study was conducted for about ten years and produced numerous publications. The first (Anti-HLA after solid organ transplantation, Transplantation, Vol 69, No 3, 319-236, 2000) led to one of his most important papers in my assessment, the development of The Humoral Theory of Transplantation (Humoral Theory of Transplantation, AJT, Vol 3, No 6, 665-673, 2003).

In the early 2000s his creativity brought to a second technological revolution laboratories. The methods of molecular biology and immunochemistry that became available led to the creation of new tools that would change forever the routines of transplant immunology laboratories. The emergence of the single antigen beads opened paths before only dreamed (Human Leukocyte Antigen Single Flow Cytometry Beads for Accurate Identification of Human Leukocyte Antibody specificities. Transplantation, Vol 75, No 1, 43-49, 2003).

All his scientific life, as if possible to summarize, led to the paper Personal Perspective: 100-Year History of Theory of the Humoral Transplantation. Transplantation, Vol 93, No 8, 751-756, 2012. It is compulsory reading. At the Transplantation website there is a short video available with Terasaki himself summarizing the paper.

In my personal relationship with him, I think I was privileged. After our first contact we regularly meet in congresses and meetings. I included my lab at the Santa Casa Hospital, on his multicenter prospective studies on the role of antibodies after transplantation and, in 2002, I had the great pleasure of hosting him in Porto Alegre for the event commemorating the 10th anniversary of my laboratory.
During this visit something curious happened. The social event was quite different. Instead of a dinner or reception we had a meeting in the flying club where I fly gliders. Everyone agreed, including him, but he said that he would spend the day at the field with us, but that he was not going to fly.

This day arrived and we went all to the flying club. The flights began (there were about 30 people on the list of those who would fly) and all leave the glider elated with the experience. He was accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Hisako Terasaki, a great artist, who spent the day talking to my wife Beatrice. As the flights were succeeding he was slowly approaching the runway, looking more curious and interested. After a while he returned to where Mrs. Hisako was and commented that these flights seem indeed very good to be experienced, everyone was enjoying it and he would also like to make one, but he felt responsible for a lot of people, that it would be unwise and that it would be better not to take any risks. Mrs. Hisako response was quick and precise: - if you think that, why don’t you take care of your diet? His response was also fast: - I will fly …

And that is how I took Paul Terasaki to fly a glider over Southern Brazil. Also at this meeting was Robert Bray, and he photographed Paul wearing the parachute and boarding the glider in my company.

The last visit of Paul Terasaki to Brazil was in 2012, again attending to my invitation, this time to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Laboratory of Santa Casa.

In January 2014 he celebrated his retirement. He organized a big party, the Terasaki Festschrift in Los Angeles. All the great pioneers were there, along with a large group of his friends. I had the immense honor of being personally invited by him to be present. In addition, the photographs of that glider flight were shown to this audience. What a privilege I had! Last year, at the ASHI meeting, Robert Bray received the Terasaki Award. In his speech Bob, talking about Paul, once more showed “what Paul likes to do in his free time: flying glider in Brazil…”

Paul Terasaki leaves a huge legacy. Physically there is the Terasaki Building, donated by him to the UCLA, and the Terasaki Institute, now, after his death, to be taken over also by UCLA.

His greatest legacy, however, is not measured in buildings or institutes. His example of perseverance and overcoming obstacles is rare to find. As a young man he saw all his family possessions confiscated on the day the United States and Japan went to war in 1941. For three years he lived with his family in an internment camp in the Arizona desert. At the end of the war he restarted his life from scratch. His "revenge" of this episode, he told me on one occasion, was never more pass through Hollywood, producer of many films with a biased image of Japan and the Japanese.

His perseverance is evident in his scientific career. With very scarce biological material to work, he developed ways to make the maximum with the minimum. He never gave up his conviction about the role of antibodies in the evolution of transplants and found the methods needed to prove his point, today completely accepted. His publications, close to a thousand, had a
huge impact in the field of immunogenetics and histocompatibility, and are one of the pillars on which the entire area of the transplants is based.

He was a rare person. Always friendly, listening, attentive and brilliant. He had the humility that only the really great posses. His example will stay, but his absence will be deeply felt.