Born in Salvador, in 1917, he came to Rio de Janeiro when he was 4 as his father, a doctor and a university professor, was elected federal congressman, and concentrated his initiatives on Healthcare and Education.

The father figure and the important professors that frequented his home, such as Carlos Chagas and Fernando de Magalhães, were essential in his choice to become a doctor. He graduated at Faculdade de Medicina da Praia Vermelha in 1939. He was awarded a Prize for having the highest grades during the undergraduate course. He was chosen to be the speaker at the graduation ceremony.

He remained in the University, beginning his practice in Santa Casa da Misericórdia as an assistant for the 2nd Unit of Internal Medicine, presided by his father. He revered his father and considered him his mentor. He was fully dedicated to studying and started to prepare to be a professor early in life. He became associate professor at 27, and full professor at 38.

He inherited from his father the inclination to medicine and teaching, but he also had skills to be an administrator and a leader, visible in the Internal Medicine Unit of Santa Casa, which he started in 1957. He chose a highly valuable team that, in no time, became the Unit respected in the country.

In 1966, he was elected vice-dean of the University. He was dean for 13 months, as dean Raymundo Moniz de Aragão became Minister of Education, but later on resigned from his position. In an emotional speech that was vehemently applauded, Clementino Fraga Filho refused the indication of the University Council to become
the official dean. The dedication which is required in this position would prevent him from seeing patients and teaching.

His period as dean occurred during the time of the military government and also of the Reforma Universitária, to which he contributed markedly. As he was informed that his position would be revoked, he continued to defend the institution and to be open to student manifestations. His four-hour conversation with students led by Vladimir Palmeira, in 1968 in the Teatro de Arena of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), made history.

His successful experience in Internal Medicine Unit of Santa Casa, which cannot be separated from his dedication to the University and his leadership, is the origin of the unanimous indication to direct the School of Medicine, in 1974, and, at the same time, to conduct the special commission for the creation of the University Hospital, a historical wish of the faculty and students of the School.

The Hospital was founded in 1978, after exhaustively overcoming dogmatic, political, and bureaucratic obstacles, besides the lack of financial and human resources. Some days before the foundation of the Hospital, he wrote in his diary, which became public in 2008. “We are in the final phase of the first important task: the establishment of the Hospital. Few people can assess the size of this mission, given its multiplicity and diversity, the countless problems that appear each and every day. There was a moment when I asked the assistants to bring me the problems on predetermined days, as wholesale, once problems every day and every hour were impossible to face. As this important moment comes closer, the greater the number of people involved, the more numerous the personal problems, and the small and large arguments, the demands, the lack of understanding grew. Basic issues which had already been solved, started to be questioned again, in a useless and tiresome attempt”.

To finish this job, he became the first Director of the Hospital. He was recognized by the University Council, and as proposed by Professor Anna Maria de Castro, the hospital received his name. He stayed in UFRJ until 1985, and was not able to end his career together with his students and patients, as he wished.

He was never away from clinical practice, convinced that teaching and practicing would improve the quality of both occupations. His coherence with Internal Medicine should be emphasized: as a faculty member, he taught Internal Medicine; as director of the School of Medicine, he promoted curricular changes that valued this practice; as Hospital Director, he gave priority to the structure of general services; in the Associação Brasileira de Educação Médica (ABEM), he always defended the education of the clinical practitioner; in his private office, he was a clinical practitioner.

On his consistent path, his professional dignity and loyalty to his alma mater should be emphasized. To his alma mater, he devoted his time and expertise, in spite of opportunities in public administration that were available to him and would make him more visible. He accepted to be included in the Medical Education Commission of the MEC, the National Health Council, and the Conselho Consultivo de Administração da Saúde Previdenciária (CONASP), besides being president of ABEM. Such positions have allowed him to enlarge the action for the benefit of medical education and health services.

He was brave enough to show the problems in medical education caused by inaptitude, omission, or authority involvement in education.

Professor Fraga was an enthusiastic practitioner. He was welcoming, respectful, and compassionate with his patients in Santa Casa and in his private practice. He was a role model in bedside teaching. He was gentle when approaching and leaving his patients, as he thanked them, comforted them, and lifted their spirits. He regretted not having chosen for his Service the words of Apostle Paul: “I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received: be completely humble and gentle”.

When he was 90, he collected memories of his long path in two books – Evocações and Memórias de um médico humanista. In these books, he showed the final balance of a life dedicated to clinical practice and to the School of Medicine of UFRJ, of which the Hospital, according to him, was an extension and the main instrument for the effectiveness their missions.

He worked in his private practice until the moment that his disease allowed it. It was not easy for him to accept to be far away. When asked about the current problems in the doctor-patient relationship, he said: “I am away from the practice for 6 years now, and for me, today, the problem is that I miss my patients”. He would get emotional when remembering this practice. Similar to Paul Millicz, French doctor and professor, he felt he had a debt with his patients: “Giving myself to them gives me the impression that I am useful”.
He left the example of moral elegance in the disease that imposed so many restrictions on him: it took him away from social contacts, and prevented him from reading and writing. He was a polite man, and even in his isolation, he continued to be loving and gentle with those that took care of him. He showed no visible bitterness, did not complain, but several times said he was tired of the days that were too long due to lack of activity. The days were always the same. Slowly, he spoke less and less. He passed away on May 11th, having respected his calling. He fulfilled his destiny in the 98 years that were given to him.