

Dr. Orlando Leoncio NÃºÃ±ez FernÃ¡ndez: An example of self-improvement, civic-mindedness, and love for Los Palacios.

Description

Brotherhood Herald

By: Editorial Staff / Based on an account by **Omar Rubio Ã•lvarez** (Culture Commission of the *Fraternidad PalaceÃ±a*)
To speak of the civic, cultural, and fraternal history of Los Palacios, in Pinar del RÃo, is to speak of Dr. Orlando Leoncio NÃºÃ±ez FernÃ¡ndezâ??a man whose life stands as a living testament to self-reliance, moral integrity, and commitment to his community.
Born on January 13, 1920, in Taco-Taco (San CristÃ³bal) and a resident of Los Palacios since 1923â??where his father served as a railway station masterâ??NÃºÃ±ez FernÃ¡ndez grew up in a large family of twelve siblings, a household defined by a love for education and honest labor. He learned the meaning of sacrifice at a very young age: by eleven, he was working at the â??RevoluciÃ³nâ?• clothing store, and by fifteen, he was tasked with lighting the lamps at the railway switches. Later, his restless, ambitious spirit led him to work at the *Central La Francia* (sugar mill), in various commercial establishments, and in Havanaâ??all while never losing his thirst for knowledge.
A tireless autodidact, he made the most of libraries and night schools to further his education, eventually achieving a feat truly worthy of admiration: between 1947 and 1951, he pursued studies in Administration and Law at the University of Havana (later earning his doctorate). Throughout this period, he would travel by train dailyâ??leaving Los Palacios at six in the morning to attend classes, and returning by two in the afternoon to fulfill his professional duties as a telegraph operator and treasurer for the local municipal government. His impact on the community was profound:

- Public service and historical memory: He served as treasurer for the Los Palacios municipal government between 1944 and 1959, demonstrating exemplary integrity. Together with local teachers, he also recovered the municipal Historical Archive, which had been established in 1812.
- Promoter of sports and culture: An active *pelota* (baseball/softball) player, he spearheaded the creation of several playing fields and secured the donation of the land for what is now the Rosendo Collazo Stadium. Additionally, he participated in charitable theater troupes that raised funds for social causes.
- Commitment to fraternity: He embraced Freemasonry from a young age, driven by his passion for justice, human rights, and the spiritual advancement of humanity.

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The legacy of Dr. Orlando Leoncio NÃºÃ±ez FernÃ¡ndez remains a beacon of dignity for new generations of *palaceÃ±os* (residents of Los Palacios) and for all those who cherish fraternity and Cuban culture.

Complete Biography and Chronology (Selected Data)

Personal and Family Information

- Full name: Dr. Orlando Leoncio NÃºÃ±ez FernÃ¡ndez.
- Date and place of birth: January 13, 1920, in Taco-Taco, San CristÃ³bal, Pinar del RÃo.
- Residence: He moved to Los Palacios in 1923.
- Family: He had 11 siblings (12 children in total). His father was a railway station master and a Freemason. Three of his sistersâ??Zulema, Adria, and Genovevaâ??were trained educators (*maestras normalistas*). His brothers-in-law included the educator Dr. Guillermo Leal and Julio Garriga MartÃnez (at whose home a cultural salon/gathering group was hosted).
- Early education: He completed his primary schooling in Los Palacios under the guidance of notable teachers, including Higinio Ã•lvarez ValdÃ©s, Claudina MartÃnez, Rosita Mate, Fe MarÃa RodrÃguez, MarÃa MartÃnez, Clara RodrÃguez, Antonio ValdÃ©s ValdÃ©s, and Ambrosio Sotolongo. Professional and Economic Background
- 1931 (age 11): Began working at the â??RevoluciÃ³nâ?• clothing store (on Maceo Street), earning $3.00 per month.
- 1935 (age 15): Worked as a lamp lighter for the railroad (lighting the lamps at railway switches), earning $16.00 per month.
- 1936: Worked briefly at the â??La Franciaâ?• sugar mill, collecting fallen sugarcane using a small rail cart; later worked as a clerk at the â??El ParaÃsoâ?• and â??Casa Pepeâ?• clothing stores (earning $16.80 per month).
- Period in Havana: Worked as a traveling sales representative across the provinces of Havana, Matanzas, and Pinar del RÃo for an American company that distributed hardware and pharmaceutical products ($20.00 per week plus commissions). Attended night classes at the preparatory school of the â??La Dependienteâ?• mutual aid clinic and made use of the library belonging to the writer Juan J. Remos.
- 1943: Returned to Los Palacios to work as a shopkeeper at the Guasimal sugarcane plantation.
- 1944â??1959: Served as treasurer for the Los Palacios municipal government (from October 16, 1944, to January 1, 1959) during the mayoral term of Francisco Bugallo; also worked as a telegraph operator at the railway station.
- Legal Practice: Practiced law, handling numerous cases throughout Cuba.
  University Education
- 1947: Enrolled at the University of Havana.
- 1948: Completed a degree in administration.
- 1951: Earned a law degree (Licenciatura en Derecho) and subsequently obtained a Doctorate in Law. Social, cultural, and fraternal contributions
- Fraternity and ethics: A member of Freemasonry, inspired by his fatherâ??s example and his commitment to justice and free will.
- Culture and history: Together with local educators, he organized the Municipal Archive of Los Palacios (established in 1812 by a royal decree signed â?¦by JosÃ© Bonaparte). He participated as an actor in comedies depicting local customsâ??staged for charitable purposesâ??alongside RamÃ³n Alonso RodrÃguez and other neighbors.

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- Sports: He was an active baseball player for the Central La Francia club; he promoted the creation of several baseball fields and secured, through Mr. Aurelio Collazo, the donation of the land for the Rosendo Collazo Stadium.
- Civic life: He witnessed significant historical events during the 1930s and 1940s (the struggle against Machado, the 1933 uprising led by General Peraza, and a political rally in Pinar del RÃo where he met Eduardo ChibÃ¡s, Rufo LÃ³pez Fresquet, and Emeterio Santovenia).

â??At 83 years of age, I give thanks to the Great Architect of the Universe for the fullness of life He has granted meâ?¦â?•
â??Thanks to the Creator, I still breathe and continue to enjoy spiritual pleasures that are essential to meâ??such as reading every single day.â?•
Signed: Los Palacios, Pinar del RÃo, September 2003.

Category

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