

Eusebio Leal Spengler: An exceptional man

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The University of Havana will present the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa in Humanities to the City Historian this Tuesday.

Faithful follower of Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring's ideas, Eusebio Leal Spengler has left for Cuban history an unprecedented work, especially in the restoration of the colonial Havana.

We Cubans must thank Eusebio, since his wise and educated vision allowed him to foresee the importance of restoring a city built by emigrants and natives. A city surrounded by sea, a city that cannot die or fall into oblivion.

Following the steps of his predecessors, Leal has steered hundreds of projects, not only aiming at preserving the lights and shadows of the city, but also preserving its most authentic values.

The Historical Center — or the Old Havana, as it is commonly known— live in tone with its people and it is enriched day after day with popular wisdom.

In its streets and cobblestoned squares, ancient and modern elements, foreign and domestic things harmoniously coexist.

Eusebio did not envision a city museum. He fostered that locals and visitors might share the daily life in a very simple way.

So it converges the lives of shops and bars, schools and guesthouses, galleries and squares.

Eusebio has been, barring any doubts, a man of our times; a respectable Cuban man, of high-flying word, and surprising eloquence.

Because of health issues, Leal has been distant from public opinion. A few weeks ago at the Cuba Pavilion, he confessed “the return was necessary, especially when you have certain responsibilities and you are used to carry out them in details: the lamp that is still switched on at noon, the agonizing tree; everything is a special motivation to me”.

To the long list of titles and awards given nationally and internationally, the University of Havana will present the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa in Humanities this Tuesday to Eusebio Leal. Such prize will certainly touch his heart due to the significance of this tercentenary university.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Diaz / Cubasi Translation Staff
