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Havana*

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Havana, February 18 (Cubadebate)-- Journalist, writer and prestigious film critic Rolando Pérez Betancourt, screenwriter and host of the television program La séptima puerta, died Saturday in Havana.

"Farewell, Rolando Pérez Betancourt, thank you for teaching us that journalism is commitment and nonconformity. Thank you for always preferring risk and for showing us that without risk and sacrifice there is no journalism," he wrote on his Twitter account Cubaperiodistas.

Several colleagues and friends have lamented on social networks the death of the prominent Granma journalist, born in Havana on September 25, 1945.

"The death of Rolando Pérez Betancourt leaves his home incomplete, with the painful weight of an irreparable absence for Granma, a newspaper he founded when he was just a child (aged 16), and where he exercised an admirable freedom of thought without ever failing to tell the truth," said Yailin Orta, director of the newspaper.

"Since he started at Hoy newspaper he never lacked the support of the communists, starting with Blas Roca Calderío, who did not put limits to his vocation for having then only an eighth grade, imposed by the context of the time and the precariousness suffered by his family. I have no doubt that the school of trust and encouragement he found there was molding his character, which was thorough and rigorous, and also critical and daring to see beyond the epidermal.

"Rolando once defined himself as a literacy teacher of taste, a condition he passionately defended for more than 40 years in our pages, and more than 25 on television, owner of a deep, balanced, convincing and empathetic tone, which earned him the respect of readers and viewers.

"In him we had not only an exceptional columnist, a quality and professional values that were recognized with the José Martí National Award, but also a gentleman, owner of a touching integrity, and a sincere companion and friend, with a clean and frank hand.

"I could say a lot about him, but there is his work -journalistic and literary- to do justice to his proverbial intelligence, his upright conduct as an intellectual and organic revolutionary, his imprint in our best memories and his infinite dedication to the family he cared for with loving devotion," Yailin Orta highlighted in his Facebook profile.

Pérez Betancourt, Granma notes, was a sports columnist, national reporter and was trained in literary journalism "and in what really interested me, to delve into the human side of those who participated in the Revolution," he commented in the interview to Cubaperiodistas. He was also chief of the cultural page and editor-in-chief for 25 years.

For more than 40 years he published in Granma the section Crónica del espectador, the oldest in this kind of specialty.

In addition to La séptima puerta, he was previously in other television programs such as Tanda del Domingo and Cine Vivo. (Source/Cubadebate).

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