



## **“Bengt Hallqvist: Corporate governance loses a great leader and friend” - Sandra Guerra, Better Governance**

“Life has always been very generous to me and one of the gifts she gave me was to live for about 34 years with Bengt Hallqvist. An example and an inspiration, Bengt opened the door to corporate governance and changed my life.



This determined - not to say stubborn - Swedish had a firm vision when he assembled a group of people in February 1995 to discuss how boards could go far beyond insomniac meetings and add real value to companies. I had the privilege of being part of this small group that at the end of the same year created what would later become IBGC - Brazilian Institute of Corporate Governance.

Already when I met him, about 9 years before, he became an object of inspiration for his character, sense of justice and above all the solid principles that guided all his decisions. Bengt already gave unambiguous demonstrations of concern about transparency, ethics, accountability, and corporate responsibility long before these concepts were discussed. The words sustainability and stakeholder were not yet known, and Bengt set an example in the late 1980s by having the managers of a company in which he held a turnaround personally take charge of supervising the replacement of the fired for months at a time until all were replaced again. And that was one of the many examples I could witness and that led me to stay around this inspiring leader.

Bengt lived in Brazil, Argentina, Columbia, Germany, Mexico, Portugal, United Kingdom and the United States, as well as his native Sweden. He served on more than 50 boards in 20 countries after a solid career as an executive. In addition to being the engine for IBGC's foundation, it has participated in a number of initiatives around the world to improve governance.



It was to thank him for the privilege of living with him that in September 2016 I visited him in small Stenungsund, Sweden, where he had moved after decades of living in Brazil. I wanted to be able to say goodbye while the memory was present and we could remember the route for the improvement of the governance and all the mishaps and conquests that we lived together. And when I thought I had nothing left to learn from him, Bengt surprised me once more.

It bothered me to imagine how he would be in the quiet Stenungsund after the busy life he had when he proudly counted that he had spent more days traveling in a year than his own home. And this time Bengt gave me a life lesson. I found a man accomplished and at peace with his choices. No bitterness to have left behind the frenetic pace of constant travel, challenging projects and acting as Board Director and executive, but a man finding charms in every little detail of his new life. Reading the newspaper on the porch facing the canal watching the boats he always loved, working on the book that chronicled his experience - Ask for it or just do it! - the regular visits to his steady companion Lisbeth on a nearby island and the closest cohabitation with one of the daughters who live in Oslo and the other children scattered around the world. It is inspiring to see someone reaching this mature stage with such good humour, happy with all the moments of his life and without regrets. Once again Bengt offered me an example of life: allowing himself to be happy when



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age begins to have meaning in itself, knowing how to turn the page and cheerfully embrace the little charms that life offers.

Corporate governance loses a great leader. The loss of my friend is invaluable.

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Bengt passed away at the age of 88 on the 13<sup>th</sup> April surrounded by his family.”

The above was written by Sandra Guerra, Better Governance