

Eda C. B. Machado de Souza '73g, '75g

She never planned on being the principal of an elementary school when she was 17 or founding a new university in her country's capital and building it into one of the most respected institutions of higher learning in Brazil. But throughout her long and varied career, Eda Machado de Souza has never passed up a challenge. She credits her father and her mother for her interest in education. "I never worked before I was 17, because they told all seven of us it was more important to study," she recalls. "They knew that money comes and goes, but an education is forever. They made sure our family was very academically oriented."



After she finished teacher preparation, she got married and moved to Arapongas, State of Paraná, where the mayor appointed her principal of an elementary school. Even though she thought she was too young and lacked experience, she had to accept, because she needed a job. The mayor later appointed her to start the town's first public library. Thus began a career that would result in Machado becoming one of her country's most influential educators.

Educational programs for workers were not always popular in Brazil. In the mid-1960s, Machado was considered "subversive" for her work to improve literacy among rural workers and for articles she published on that effort. Because of the political pressure, she moved to Brasília in 1966 and accepted a new challenge as the assistant of the director of the Integrated Center of Secondary Education of the University of Brasília, the most innovative center in Brazil. While working, she earned a bachelor's in pedagogy from the University of Brasília (she earlier received a bachelor's in library science). Following a stint teaching at the University of Brasília, Machado was selected for a USAID scholarship to study in the United States. She completed her master's and doctoral degrees at Penn State in a little more than three years.

Back in Brazil, Machado first taught at the State University of Campinas and after three years was invited to join the CAPES Foundation, the Ministry of Education's special agency for improving the quality of education in Brazil. She also served as superintendent of International Cooperation in the Ministry of Science and Technology. After 18 years of public service, Machado returned to the University of Brasília as the coordinator of the UNESCO Chair of Distance Learning.

Machado says she was looking forward to the relative calm of "teaching and doing research" when a friend invited her to create the private Instituto de Educação Superior de Brasília (IESB). As president and founder, in six years she's guided the university from 320 students in two programs to 10,000 students enrolled in 18 four-year programs on two campuses. She recently joined a newly founded university in southern Brazil. "I hope to improve it to the same state as IESB in Brasília," she says.

Machado has been recognized for her work with a Humboldt Foundation Fellowship for postdoctoral studies at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, numerous awards in Brazil, and by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology of the United States. In 1994, she was a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan. Machado lives in

Brasília with her husband, Edson. Her daughter, Liliane, is also a founder of IESB and its administrative director. Her son, Edson Filho, attends university in Brazil, and her grandson, Pedro Emilio, is a senior high school student.

*This career summary is excerpted from the 2004 Distinguished Alumni Awards Ceremony booklet (June 4, 2004, The Pennsylvania State University).