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Ivo Pitanguy was born in Belo Horizonte, state of Minas Gerais. His father, Antonio Pitanguy was a general surgeon and his mother Maria Stäel, a woman of culture and a true humanist.

In his last years at the University of Minas Gerais, young Ivo was drafted by the army and had to move to Rio de Janeiro to serve in the cavalry. He was then transferred to the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro to finish Medical School and start the basic training in General Surgery at the Pronto Socorro Emergency Hospital and at the University of Brasil under Dr. George Grey. During his training, he realized that only treating wounds that would later result in important deformities was not enough. These patients needed reconstructive surgeries as well, to be free from the stigmas of deformities that many times prevented them to return to their normal activities and to be accepted by their social groups. Since plastic surgery training was not available in Brasil at that time, Pitanguy decided to look to distant horizons. He earned a scholarship from the Institute of International Education to serve as resident-in-training under Dr. John Longacre, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Here he obtained his basic training in Plastic Surgery. During his stay in the USA, he visited the Mayo Clinic and other Plastic Surgery Services (such as those of Dr. MacDowell and Dr. John Marquis Converse). Upon returning to Brasil, in the early 50's, Pitanguy began a Hand and Plastic Surgery Unit at the Santa Casa General Hospital of Rio de Janeiro (a charity institution dating back to the 1500's) where he had the possibility of treating patients while sharing his knowledge with other surgeons eager to learn plastic surgery. The desire to introduce plastic surgery to the medical and to the social communities of Rio strongly motivated him to create a formal school of training. Though he had already placed a firm stand in plastic surgery, he still felt he needed to learn more. The opportunity came with Dr. Marc Iselin, who while visiting Pitanguy at the general hospital, invited him to be a Fellow in Nanterre, Paris. While in France, Pitanguy attended the plastic surgery services of Drs. Dufourmentel, Mouly, and Paul Tessier, Morel Fatio and others. Granted another scholarship, he went to England. There he studied under Sir Harold Gillies, Sir Archibald McIndoe and Professor Kilner. Returning to Brazil and to his work at the General Hospital of Rio de Janeiro, he sensed the importance of teaching others and clearly saw the role that Brazil could play in the proper consolidation of the specialty. In this same period, he built his private clinic where, to his day, he receives and treats his patients. Pitanguy's idea of combining teaching and the treatment of the private patients was thus made possible with the Ivo Pitanguy Clinic.

By uniting these two institutions, the private clinic and the general hospital unit, he created the Department of Plastic Surgery, under the aegis of two prestigious universities: the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and the Carlos Chagas Institute of Post Graduate Medical Studies. Today, both these institutions, together with the clinic and the 38th Ward at Santa Casa, constitute the Ivo Pitanguy Institute. At the private clinic and at the general hospital, the training of the residents encompasses aesthetic and reconstructive surgeries, following the philosophy of his School which is that, both rich and poor patients should have the same opportunity to benefit from plastic surgery treatments.

Together with his associates, Ivo Pitanguy has trained 530 plastic surgeons from Brazil and from 42 different countries, in the 3 year training course. A total of 758 fellows and 4,962 visiting doctors have attended the Plastic Surgery Department in the last 50 years.

Pitanguy has traveled the world giving conferences (over 2,000) as Visiting Professor and guest of honour of numerous Universities, Congresses and Simposiums among which: Kazanjian Visiting Professor at the Massachusetts General Hospital, The New York University by invitation of Prof. Converse, The King Hussein Medical Center, The Freie Universität of Berlin, The British Association of Plastic Surgeons, The Brussels University by invitation of NATO. He received several honorary titles, and decorations such as Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of Tel Aviv, Chancelier des Universités de Paris, Sorbonne, "Membro Onorario de la Società Medica di Bologna, The first Humanitarian Award by the Auxiliary of the Hathaway Home for children in Chicago, The Golden Saw Award by the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, the Order of "Ouissan Alouite de l'Ordre de Commandeur" by his Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco, and the prize "Insieme per la Pace" by the Pope John Paul II. He received the title of Officier de la Legion D'Honneur, "Grande Ufficiale Dell'Ordine Al Merito della Repubblica Italiana", and "Ivo Pitanguy Day" was declared by the Mayor of the City of Indianapolis (5 of March). He is also Honorary Citizen of several cities, including Paris, Nice, Arezzo, Miami, and Stia. Pitanguy was honored by his peers with the title of Patron of the Brazilian Society of Plastic Surgery.

Pitanguy is a Member of the Brazilian Academy of Medicine, the Brazilian Academy of Letters, The Brazilian College of Surgeons, The International College of Surgeons, The American College of Surgeons, The American Society of Plastic Surgeons, The International Plastic and Reconstructive Aesthetic Surgery , The Société Française de Chirurgie Plastique Reconstructive et Esthétique, The British Association of Plastic Surgeons, among many others.

Pitanguy has published more than 900 papers on plastic surgery and related issues. He has written many books among which: Mamoplastias, Plastic Operations of the Auricle, Atlas de Cirurgia Palpebral, and the atlas Aesthetic Surgery of the Head and Body (which won the prize of best scientific book of the Frankfurt Book Fair of 1981). Other books include *Plastische Eingriffe An der Ohrmuschel*, *Le Chemins de la Beauté*, *Le Vie della Belleza.*, *Aprendiz do Tempo*, *Cartas a um jovem Cirurgião*, *Um jeito de ver o Rio*, *Paraty*, *Angra dos Reis*, *A Baía dos Reis Magos*, *O Direito à Beleza e Aprendendo com a Vida*.

His contributions to other books include chapters on his personal techniques and surgical experience (87), and prefaces (70). His Department of Plastic Surgery edited in Portuguese and English the “*Boletim de Cirurgia Plastica*”, which was indexed, and sent regularly to universities and plastic surgery services in Brazil and abroad for 15 years.

An ardent nature-lover, Pitanguy devotes much of his time to the protection of the environment. In 1970 he created an ecological sanctuary on his island in Angra dos Reis, a resort near the city of Rio de Janeiro where he preserves endangered species. He has also a passion for art, and was the president of the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro for 10 years.

Married to Marilu Nascimento, Pitanguy has 3 sons and 1 daughter, Ivo, Gisela, Helcius, Bernardo and 5 grandsons.