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A tribute to my “Maestro” Gianpietro Del Piero

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It is my privilege to write this personal tribute for the special volume of Continuum Mechanics and Thermodynamics dedicated to honor Professor Gianpietro Del Piero on the occasion of his retirement.

I first met him twenty-one years ago this autumn. I was an undergraduate student attending the first lesson of his course of Strength of Materials. Even though the third year in Engineering of Materials at the University of Ferrara had only been established for a year, it was already famous for being blessed with the most demanding professor. The course turned out to be extremely well taught. The next year I took his course of Continuum Mechanics. It had a profound influence on my decision to undertake an academic career. I still have my notes, which I use for teaching and which I recently shared with a colleague, feeling as if I was passing him something precious. I am sure he felt the same. In the years that followed, I had the opportunity to have Professor Del Piero as advisor, first for my Bachelor and then for my Doctoral thesis.

He was and still is my mentor. He is intellectually honest and taught me that all ideas are worthy of respect independently of the people who express them. I believe that this quality makes him a very encouraging teacher.

He has been dedicated to the continual improvement of his research work, setting high standards, above all for himself, and for his students. I have always been impressed by his constant search for simplification and order. He taught me that it is the best way to see things clearly, to establish new connections between elements apparently disparate; in a word, to do research.

It has been a great privilege to have had him as a teacher and mentor, and I am grateful that I have been given this space to thank him.

I wish Professor Del Piero the best of health, energy, and happiness in the years ahead, and I am looking forward to many more years of joint work.