

OBITUARY

MICHELE CAPURSO (1935 - 1987)

Professor Michele Capurso, member of the Editorial Board of «Meccanica», passed away on June 21, 1987. The loss of him is deeply felt within and outside our national community of theoretical and applied mechanics of solids and structures.

Michele Capurso obtained his «laurea» in civil engineering «cum laude» from the University of Naples, where soon after he started his academic career as an assistant in 1960. He was awarded the «libera docenza in Scienza delle Costruzioni» in 1967 and in 1970 became a full professor of structural mechanics at the University of Bologna, where he worked and taught up to his so untimely death. He served as Department Head from 1972 to 1975 and was elected fellow of the Academy of Sciences of Bologna in 1974.

The broad spectrum of scientific interests of Professor Capurso included various areas in theoretical and structural plasticity, the analysis of plates and shells especially in reinforced concrete, the theory of thin-walled beams, structural applications of mathematical programming, computer-aided design and analysis of civil engineering structures.

Among his many brilliant scientific contributions published in about 80 papers, particularly memorable and fruitful are those on the extremum characterizations of incremental elastic-plastic solutions, his results concerning rigid-plastic dynamic responses and those establishing upper bounds on values attained by history-dependent quantities after shakedown of elastic-plastic solids. His original contributions in these areas were widely praised and provided stimulus to further research far beyond his school and our national solid and structural mechanics community.

Six comprehensive and systematic monographs (books and chapters of treatises or handbooks), some of them deservedly popular in our structural engineering environment, closely reflect Capurso's dedicated, passionate and inspiring work as a teacher; they witness his special taste and skill for clear and vivid presentations and for effective combinations of scientific rigour and engineering judgement and concreteness. In fact, he had the rare gift to make his activities as researcher, professor and engineer, harmoniously complementary to each other, crossfertilizing and synergetic.

Michele Capurso was also endowed with enthusiasm, humour and generosity and with a deep sense of life, first of all family life enriched by a passion for music shared with his wife Teresa and their six children. Not only the scientific but also the human dimensions of his outstanding personality cause a deep sense of loss and sorrow in those of us fortunate enough to have known him.

GIULIO MAIER