In Memoriam: Vincenzo Panagia, MD, PhD

Enzo Panagia, an outstanding scientist, superb human being, and valued Assistant Editor of this Journal, died on November 24, 2000 after an heroic battle with cancer. He is survived by his beloved wife Marisa, and sons Davide and Marcello.

Born on April 9, 1939 in Milano (Italy), Enzo received his MD and PhD degrees at the University of Pavia. He served as Assistant Professor at the Institute of Human Physiology in Pavia from 1963 to 1975. He then transferred to the University of Brescia where he was appointed Medical Assistant and subsequently Deputy Head in the Division of Clinical Biochemistry. In 1977, Enzo, Marisa and their two young boys moved to Winnipeg, Canada where Enzo took on the position of Research Associate in the Department of Physiology at the University of Manitoba. He was promoted to Assistant Professor and eventually became Full Professor in the Departments of Physiology, Anatomy, and the Faculty of Medicine. Most recently, Enzo was the Director of the Laboratory of Membrane Biology at the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences at the St. Boniface General Hospital Research Centre.

Enzo was regarded internationally for his research into membrane phospholipid metabolism in the diseased myocardium. In particular, his work was instrumental in defining an important role for phospholipid N-methylation in the heart disease process. His research was meticulous, of the highest standard, and thought provoking as evinced in his 150 publications ranking him as an international expert in his field. He was recognized for his research with numerous invitations to meetings and visiting lectureships at academic institutions, as well as being consistently awarded external grant support. Particularly bittersweet was his most recent notification of success: a five-year award from the Medical Research Council of Canada announced in June, 2000; on the same day he learned of the recurring colon tumor that would eventually take his life.

Despite his many academic accolades, Enzo was a gifted lecturer, teacher, and mentor who counted, amongst his greatest career achievements, being awarded the 'Graduate Students Association Award for Excellence in Mentorship, Teaching, and Research in the Faculty of Medicine' (1999). This recognition reflected his dedication to graduate students and,

indeed, to all members of his laboratory whom he considered part of his extended family. Amongst the many fond memories his students have mentioned were the yearly Christmas dinners Enzo, Marisa, and their sons hosted for anyone whom, like themselves, were away from their families during the holidays.

A devoted family man, Enzo was especially (and justifiably) proud of Davide and Marcello; both of whom were awarded Rhodes Scholarships in their respective disciplines. He will be sorely missed by all for his enthusiasm for science, along with his great passion for classical music, soccer, and auto racing – especially when these involved his beloved Italy. The old Yiddish word 'mensch' defines an individual who is good, kind, decent, and honorable. Enzo was a mensch whose dignity and friendship made encounters with him an honor, a privilege and a real pleasure. He left us too early and he will be sorely missed.

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