

IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR PAOLO AGLIETTI

PAOLO ADRAVANTI

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It is always sad to hear about the death of a colleague. But is still sadder when the person who left us is one of your inspiring guide, one of the pioneer of the modern joint replacement and the main founding member of the scientific Society of which you are the current President.

Professor Paolo Aglietti was definitely one of the leading figure in the knee surgery field of the last decades. He lived and studied in Florence, the cradle of the Italian culture, but he immediately understood the importance of a wider education, out of his own country's boundaries. As a fellow in the very early '70s he attended for three years the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, at first in adult hip and then in adult knee reconstruction. During that period, besides improving his skills, he was able to create a strong and durable friendship with some of the most prominent orthopaedic surgeons of that time like Dr. Edoardo Salvati and Dr John N. Insall.

Back in Italy he had a brilliant academic career: after being Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic and Traumatology at the University of Perugia, in 1979 he became Associated Professor at the University of Florence. In the same University in 1990 he was appointed as Professor of Orthopaedic and Traumatology and in 1996 he became chief of the Orthopaedic Clinic, including the Residency Program, and served as director until 2009 when he retired.

Professor Aglietti must be an example for each of us, because he was able to perfectly combine the clinical and the scientific activity, giving the right weight to both these aspects of our job; he was a master surgeon and a very rigorous and careful researcher at the same time. He greatly contributed to the development of the knowledge in the joint replacement, starting from his first studies performed at the Hospital for Special Surgery. He gave a particular contribution to develop and evaluate the outcome results of the Insall-Burstein knee prosthesis first and then the MBK knee prosthesis, as well as his studies on ACL surgery were fundamental. He published several peer reviewed articles, mainly focused on patellar chondromalacia and malalignment, varus osteoarthritic knee and knee osteonecrosis. He was also an eminent author of milestone papers on arthroscopic meniscectomy and synovectomy.

His value was recognized by the most important scientific societies, like SIOT, ISAKOS, AAOS, AOA, ICRS, and ESSKA, of which he was an outstanding member. He was honorary member of the Knee Society and in 2007 he was elected President of the International Society of Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery & Orthopaedic Sports Traumatology (ISAKOS). In 2008, he was also included into the 2008 American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine Hall of Fame. But, above all, we had just lost our Father, the Father of our Society, the Italian Society of Knee Surgery, Arthroscopy, Sports Traumatology, Cartilage and Orthopaedic Technologies (SIGASCOT), since he was the first to foster its foundation in 2004.

I had not the luck to be one of his assistant but I had the opportunity to meet him several times. He was not that kind of person that allowed you to be intimate with him and sometimes he was also rude.

However, during time I understood the profound person he was.

It was a great honor for me to assist his surgical sessions, since it was really gifted and I really learned a lot from him. I will never forget his precious suggestions when I talked with him about some difficult cases I had to face. And also I will never stop thanking him for putting his trust on me when he wanted me to become President of the SIGASCOT Knee Committee the since its first year of foundation.

All the Italian orthopaedic surgeons, and in particular the SIGASCOT members, should be greatly grateful to Professor Aglietti for what he taught us and for the precious heritage he consigned us.

I would like to conclude this memorial encouraging the young surgeons to follow in his footsteps, trying to be always rigorous in the research activity and careful and conscientious in the professional choices.