

OBITUARY

Salvatore Restivo (1940-2008)



We were all deeply saddened by the loss of Professor Salvatore Restivo, Director of the Clinic of Otorhinolaryngology of the University of Palermo, in November of last year. Having been with the Clinic since 1975, I worked alongside Salvatore Restivo for 33 years as a pupil, loyal collaborator, and true friend.

Professor Restivo graduated in Palermo in 1965 and started attending the Clinic of Otorhinolaryngology. The Clinic's director at the time was Professor Ettore Borghesan, who was internationally known for his research on the internal ear. Professor Restivo inherited a passion for research and a deep-felt attachment to the Institution from his teacher and dedicated himself to the study of Histopathology and Histochemistry in the field of Otorhinolaryngology. After brilliantly completing his specialization in Otorhinolaryngology in 1967, he progressively and successfully scaled all the steps of his academic career – first as an Assistant, and then, under the tutelage of Professor Antonino Cimino, as a University Collaborator, an Associate Professor, and Professor. He later became Director of Otorhinolaryngology clinic, Director of the School of Specialization, and finally, Director of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology. His scientific research in various fields of Otology, Vestibology and Oto-neurology, and clinical and experimental Oncology, were published in many highly regarded journals. Professor Restivo was also a Speaker and Chairman at many national and international congresses, an Organizer of courses and meetings, and a Member of diverse scientific societies. He was also appointed President of the Sicilian Board of Otorhinolaryngology, Audiology, and Phoniatriy.

My memories go back to those first years in which I attended the Clinic of Otorhinolaryngology of the University of Palermo. In those years, I assisted Professor Restivo both

in clinical research projects and in the wards and surgery rooms. I remember that all the younger colleagues looked to him for guidance in difficult situations that called for rapid and effective decision-making. He, in turn, always kept a keen eye on all his pupils during surgical training. Professor Restivo's natural surgical abilities and readiness to find solutions to all kinds of problems, together with his courage and determination, made him a brilliant surgeon and a passionate researcher who was always open to innovation.

He had a decisive personality, a great sense of duty, and his directness did not lend itself well to trivial negotiations. To those who did not know him outside of the working environment, he often seemed reserved and severe. At times, he may even have seemed a little contradictory. But at social and informal events, he was much more jovial, outgoing, generous, and full of humour.

It has been said that the deepest and most hidden aspects of a human soul are brought to the surface in difficult situations. Even in sickness, Professor Restivo never lost his tenacious character, courage, determination, or dedication to the work at the Clinic of Otorhinolaryngology. He confronted his suffering with a profound Christian faith, dignity, and serenity. Everyone who worked with him – doctors, pupils, collaborators, and all the staff at the Clinic – helped him with affection and comforted him with sincerely-felt words.

The loss of a teacher, friend, and constant mentor has created an emptiness that will be very difficult for all of us to fill. Our task now is to continue with his work and to manage the Clinic of Otorhinolaryngology with care. I am sure that this would have been his wish.

Riccardo Speciale