

In Memoriam of Prof. Giorgio Sulsenti

Prof. Giorgio Sulsenti passed away on March 19, 2015. He left us in his own inimitable style, without fanfare, but accompanied with his usual sense of humour and profound wisdom. He was born in Modica, one of the most beautiful cities in Sicily. The “island” was always in his heart and soul, and especially in his Sicilian accent that never abandoned him.

Prof. Giorgio Sulsenti graduated in Medicine and Surgery in Catania, and soon after moved to Bologna where he specialised in both Otorhinolaryngology and Anesthesiology. His professional and academic career fully developed in Bologna. In the mid-sixties, he visited Maurice Cottle in Chicago, and introduced Cottle’s concepts in Italy and Europe. This marked the birth of modern rhinology in Europe under the guidance of many talented rhinologists (Masing, Montserrat-Viladiu, Guillen, Krajina, van Dishoek and the young Huizing, among many others) that followed Cottle’s philosophy. Soonafter, his practice surpassed all expectations and brought him patients from far and wide.

In 1972, Prof. Sulsenti created the first Division of Rhinology in an Italian public hospital. In the same year, he published his book *‘Chirurgia Funzionale ed Estetica del Naso’*, which was the first book on functional-aesthetic nasal surgery based on new concepts. In his book, Prof. Sulsenti described the terminology, instruments and various surgical approaches and techniques.

The text was beautifully illustrated with the excellent drawings by A. Faggioli in black and white with red accents. These illustrations played an important role in the 1970s and 1980s. A revised and expanded version was published in 1994 with the collaboration of Pietro Palma.

In the late 1970s, he pioneered international live-surgery rhinology courses in Bologna that attracted hundreds of colleagues worldwide, with growing success until the mid 1990s.

In 1980, he was elected President of the European Rhinologic Society (ERS), and organised the ERS Congress in Bologna coupled with an international live-surgery course featuring top-notch rhinosurgeons, from America and Europe.

Starting from the early 1970s, Prof. Sulsenti became an acclaimed international speaker in courses and conferences all around the world.

He was the founder of the Italian Academy of Rhinology, and became the source of reference for the entire Italian rhinologic community. His teaching activity reached a zenith when he became the Chief of the ENT Department at



Imola, Bologna. He organised several courses each year and his department was populated by national and foreign colleagues willing to improve their surgical skills in rhinology. Prof. Sulsenti was a true innovator, and understood the limitations of dogmatic teaching. He incorporated the newest aesthetic rhinoplasty techniques into the well-established *corpus* of Cottle’s philosophy. The unforgettable excitement of his mid-eighties courses attended by Prof. Gene Tardy and Prof. Stammberger as guest speakers and surgeons remains emblazoned in our memories. The newest techniques in rhinoplasty and endoscopic sinus surgery enthralled the audience for many days.

On a personal level, Prof. Sulsenti was a highly charismatic person with a very strong personality blessed by self-confidence that allowed him to win many battles, especially at a time when he was a kind of “lone wolf” in the domestic rhinoplasty arena dominated by general plastic surgeons. He placed his greatest demands on himself, and encouraged his colleagues to become masters of the technical aspects of rhinology and the ethical aspects of the doctor-patient relationship.

We have both been fortunate to have had him as our professional mentor and a matchless peer during the trials and tribulations of life. He will always live in the hearts of those who were introduced by his passion and talent to the fascinating world of surgical rhinology.

Pietro Palma and Ignazio Tasca