



Enrico Gandolfo, MD, PhD

(1946 – 2005)

Enrico Gandolfo was born in Imperia, Italy, on July 22nd, 1946. His family had a long tradition of Medicine practicing. He graduated in Medicine at the University of Genoa, in 1971, and specialized in Ophthalmology in 1975. I met him for the first time in 1977, when beginning my residency at the School of Ophthalmology, University Eye Clinic of Genoa. The Director of that School, Prof. Mario Zingirian, another unforgotten IPS honorary member, assigned me to the Perimetry Unit, which was already directed by Enrico. It represented the beginning of two important stages in my life: my brotherly friendship with Enrico, and my great passion about visual field investigation. I have always considered Enrico as my older brother. He was always kind, available, generous. He was also a very reserved guy, which is a diffuse characteristic of the population of Liguria, the Italian land where he was born, but was particularly pronounced in him. Enrico did not love so much speaking. He preferred facts, not words. Since I had the same state of mind, it happened as a rule that, for example, when reviewing the results of any of our scientific studies (Enrico appears as coauthor in most of my papers), words were pronounced by us drop-by-drop, in a surreal atmosphere, but – despite of that – our team spirit was simply perfect. Enrico was very eclectic. Beyond being a perimetry expert, he was a neuro-ophthalmologist and a 360°, skilled eye surgeon. Moreover, Enrico showed a great interest in visual disability and developed an original test for quantifying visual field impairment. For many years he was a member of the board of the Italian Section of IAPB (International Agency for Prevention of Blindness). I learned a lot from him. The IPS meeting that took place in Santa Margherita Ligure, in 1984, saw us both involved in organizing tasks. Then, we attended many other IPS meetings all over in the world. It was an extremely exciting experience. Thanks to his numerous and high qualities, Enrico became the Director of the University Eye Clinic of Brescia, in 1995, and in 1998 was the local host of the IPS meeting that took place in Gardone Riviera. When he leaved Genoa, I had the sensation of having lost a part of my body. He, for his part, was certainly glad for the achievement of a so important career milestone, but, at the same time, was sad for having to leave his beloved Liguria, his beloved sea (Brescia is in Northern Italy too, but differs completely from Genoa; no sea, no Mediterranean atmospheres, no temperate climate, etc.). Enrico did not miss any occasion for going back to his land. Every time he went back, we met. He had a great passion for cars, particularly for Italian sport cars. In the last period of his life, he owned a nice, powerful Maserati model. It had been one of his dreams. But, at the same time, he owned a rustic, spartan “Fiat Campagnola 4x4”, because he loved also off-road driving. Since I was an enthusiast myself of cars and motorsport activities, we, together with his two brothers, organized various “jeep jamborees” having for scenario the suggestive old, military roads crossing the very high mountains of “Alpi Marittime”. After starting from Italy, we regularly realized each time, at last, (in the absence of any road signs), that we had crossed the frontier into France, deducing it by the abundance of French license plates, when entering the first small village we encountered. Unfortunately, the passion of Enrico was also the cause of his tragical, premature death, at the age of 59. It was December 28th, 2005. At that time, Enrico went back to Monesi, a very small mountain village rising near the French border, for spending winter holidays with his family in his country house. He was driving a Quad Bike, when a thick sheet of ice caused the overturning of the vehicle. At present, his son Federico, who is an Ophthalmologist, is facing the task of continuing the tradition and honor the legacy inherited from his father. Thus, Enrico is still alive, in the memory of his friends, and in the continuation of his beloved job by his son.