Homage to Professor Nicolò Dallaporta

William F. Fry

Of the hundreds and hundreds of people that each of us meet in this long walk on this earth, only a few of them touch and change our lives in a major way. Fortunately for me Professor Dallaporta was one of those who contributed to making my life more complete.

It was at the Rochester Conference that I at first met him. The impression that he made on me was very strong. For this reason I can vividly remember the details of our conversation. He looked at me with those piercing eyes and a most serious expression on his face, which was occasionally broken with a big smile. When he talked his whole body moved in a way that emphasized his words. Along with the excitement of the new physics that was unfolding, he turned his discussion to the aesthetics of the culture of Padova, of Veneto and of Italy in general. His great enthusiasm left me with a strong desire to spend time in Italy. This inspired me to apply for a senior Fulbright and Guggenheim scholarships for a year stay in Italy. This stay was the beginning of a long collaboration between the University of Padova and the University of Wisconsin. He and Professor Milla Baldo Ceolin played a critical role in establishing and maintaining this collaboration which lasted for more than forty five years.

Not only was the Fulbright year very productive and an exciting one from the standpoint of physics, it was also the beginning of my deep interest in Italian culture. Professor Dallaporta was my mentor, for he devoted a lot of time, effort and enthusiasm in indoctrinating me into so many aspects of the culture of Veneto. We visited together so many wonderful places; he always conveyed to me vast amounts of his knowledge of their culture. This period in my life was the awakening to the aesthetics of Italian culture.

It is difficult to realize that Professor Dallaporta is not with us today. He lives on in the memories of all of us who were blessed to have known him. He was a dear friend, a colleague, a teacher, a mentor and a great humanist. We will miss him dearly.