

## Obituary

### Remembering Professor Felice Gavosto (February 16, 1921 – December 11, 2017)

Felice Gavosto, Professor Emeritus of Medicine at the University of Turin, Italy and co-founder of the Institute of Cancer Research and Treatment, Candiolo (Turin) passed away peacefully in the morning of December 11, 2017 aged 96.

He had a passion for science and his mantra was “*patients are better treated in the institutions which privilege research*”. Soon after taking his MD degree in Turin he decided “to do science” and worked both in New York at the Memorial Hospital and in Belgium at the University of Brussels. He then returned to Turin where he became professor of internal medicine and developed a profound interest for hematology, well before hematology became an independent discipline. He was one of the pioneers of the studies on cell kinetics in acute leukemia and his results were published in *Nature* in the early 1960s when Italian science was certainly not used to such levels of recognition. Indeed, between 1953 and 1969 Gavosto published eight papers in *Nature*, being the first author of seven of them. His papers are still quoted nowadays. He also became a close friend, better - as he used to say - a friendly competitor of legends in hematology such as Bayard Clarkson, Sven-Aage Killmann and Theodore Flidner, and was well acquainted with iconic figures such as Eugene Cronkite and Albert Bruce Sabin.

Felice Gavosto represented the gateway to science for many young investigators who later became prominent figures in hematology. He always showed a sheer enthusiasm for new developments in basic and clinical investigations. Notwithstanding his passion for blood diseases, he decided to remain professor of internal medicine, convinced as he was that the clinical approach to patients must be based upon the capacity to fully grasp all different aspects of internal medicine: this is the message that he conveyed to his students while teaching.

He had an important public role in promoting the growth of science and especially of hematologic science in Italy. In this respect, he held prominent positions: he was the chairman of a nationwide project focused on the “Control of Malignant Cell Growth” supported by the National Research Council (CNR), served as member of the Italian



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Association for Cancer Research (AIRC) for several years and was one of the founders of the Italian Association against Leukemia (AIL).

As he strongly believed that it was essential to couple science with the clinics, it was the field of oncology that in the last part of his career stimulated his enthusiastic activity and led him to champion the possibility of building, in Turin, a Cancer Institute developed along the best international lines of research and treatment. He was successful: this Institute - together with the many people who had the privilege to work with him and to grow as scientists following his example of rigorous methodology and intellectual integrity - are his legacy.

Gavosto was an eminent personality who had a full, active and exciting life, and will be missed not only by his family but also by his numerous collaborators and mentees.

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