

Curiously enough, there isn't a single paper I wrote with Pino. In fact, even if we often talked about Physics, it was never with the prospect of collaboration. We were always full-time involved in very different research directions. The age difference, almost a generation in scientific terms, also played a role. I was a student in Parma for five years in the 70's, when Pino was coming and going already as a senior researcher, soon to become professor there. But I had no chance to follow his teaching and my thesis advisor was another even younger, very inspiring assistant professor, Enrico Onofri. I remember something though: several wonderful, very informal dinners with soon to graduate students and young (and less young) professors. Pino was often among them and the seed of our friendship was set at that time.

Then I went for my route to the States and came back to Parma five years later with a precise research frame of mind, perhaps closer to Mathematical Physics and Statistical Mechanics than High Energy Physics, largely privileging abstract model building (and in two-dimensional spacetime!) over applications to particle phenomenology. That frame only tightened when I spent two years at CERN, in spite of the local contest. That's it. Since then, I found no occasion to collaborate with Pino on research matters, even if at certain point I thoroughly changed my research interests and even when we became colleagues in the Physics Department of the University of Milano first and Milano-Bicocca later on. But we constantly worked together on organization and academic matters and our friendship kept growing.

In other comments on this blog other friends and collaborators have stressed the fundamental role that Pino played in the foundation of the GGI in Florence. Here, as a direct witness of all the events, I must stress the crucial role he had in the preparation, take off and development of the new Physics Department of Milano-Bicocca, that was born at the end of last century. He was the first director and an exceptional one.

Later on, he provided many ideas, constant stimuli and, as president of the INFN theory group, crucial resources for the development of HPC among theoretical physicists nationwide and at Milano-Bicocca in particular. That was the period

when my long standing liking of numerical simulations developed into a real expertise on Computational Physics and computers in general. Undoubtedly, Pino had a substantial role in this evolution, even if, due to all other commitments, we still did not collaborate on any specific research project. During all our years together in the department, I fully grasped his incredible energy, determination, inventiveness and clear mind. For Pino was a real leader. At the same time, alas, I saw his main weakness: utter sincerity and a cutting tongue. Not always good diplomatic instruments, at least in our academic contest.

I have known only two kinds of people that interacted with him: those who really liked him and those who hated him. I am very glad to have been one of first kind, I am still outraged for the behavior of some people of the second kind in his last years at our Department and I am very sorry for his premature departure four year ago.

Milano, fall of the pandemic year 2020.

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