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Obituary for Dr. Arturo Falaschi

2010/06/17

Arturo Falaschi was born in Rome in 1933 and breathed his last in Pisa on June 01, 2010. He led a very successful life as a student, teacher and a science administrator. He graduated in Medicine in 1957 from Milan University and undertook two post doctoral studie. Firstly, with J. Adler and H.G. Khorana in Wisconsin, USA (1961 to 1962), and later with A. Kornberg at Stanford (1962 to 1965). He was Professor of Molecular Biology at the University of Pavia (1966 to 1979); Director of the Instituto di Genetica Biochimica ed Evoluzionistica, CNR., Pavia (1970 to 1987); and Director of the Progetto Finalizzato "Ingegneria Genetica" of the Italian National Research Council (1982 to 1989) He was an excellent teacher and loved his students. He taught Molecular Biology at the University of Pavia (1966 to 1979) and remained Director Graduate School of Genetics, University of Pavia (1979 to 1984). He was coordinator of the Graduate School of Molecular Genetics, International School of Advanced Studies (SISSA), Trieste (1988 to 2001) and Professor of Molecular Biology, Scuola Normale Superiore SNS, Pisa, Italy from 2004 to his last breath. Arturo was a superb experimentalist and continued his research until his last days. He has done pioneering work in i) Regulation of human DNA replication at the molecular level: identification of the origins of DNA replication and of the reactions occurring therein that lead to the initiation of bidirectional synthesis; ii) Human DNA helicases: isolation and description of the DNA unwinding enzymes present in the nucleus and identification of their possible role in origin or growing fork function; iii) Methodologies for gene therapy: developing conditions for the production of AAV-based vectors in the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*; use of yeast-derived proteins to enhance the frequency of gene targeting in human cells. As science administrator, he was responsible for the establishment of several research institutes and was a strong believer of internationalization of science and an advocate of North-South collaboration. He was very articulate and convinced several governments in the developed and the developing world to establish a 2-component International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, with one component in New Delhi, India and one in Trieste, Italy; both devoted to research and training of young researchers from the developing world. He became the first head of the Trieste Component of ICGEB (1987 to 1989) and then Director General of both components (1989 to 2004). In the pursuit of his desire to promote biotechnology and its applications in Asia, he became the Executive Director of Asia Pacific Molecular Biology Network (2006 to 2009) and then Senior Counselor (2009-to date). He had profound influence on the work plan of A-IMBN and played a key role in the success of this organization. Arturo Falaschi has left behind a large number of mourners, among his students, colleagues and science administrators. He was extremely kind hearted and very friendly. He was very helpful to his colleagues and loved his students. His departure has left behind a gap that will take a long time to fill. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

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