

## Remarks on Professor Gallieno Denardo

by

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Professor Gallieno Denardo worked for a good part of his scientific career at the University of Trieste, being a student, teaching Physics and doing research on problems of general relativity. He wrote his research papers for professional journals such as Classical and Quantum Gravity and Nuclear Physics.

At some point in his life, Gallieno became attached to the International Center for International Physics (ICTP), and the event seems to have changed his life. He, in turn, changed ICTP. I would like to mention a little about both aspects. My views are personal and cannot be regarded as professional in a proper historical sense: I knew Gallieno well (and he played a key role in my deciding to move to ICTP), but our interactions lasted for only four years and a few months. I believe, however, that the bond we developed was stronger than might be suggested by the duration of these interactions.

Gallieno was affected deeply by the difficulties that scientists in some developing countries face in their pursuit of scholarly work. He saw that ICTP provided the opportunity for doing something constructive about this difficult situation, and went about the process in a methodical way.

Gallieno played a key role in nurturing ICTP's Office of External Activities; in this role, he kept close and personal contact with many scientists, especially in Africa. He gave as much attention as needed to everyone with whom he was involved. I know that many scientists from developing countries felt that he was giving each of them his full attention. He was keenly aware of their difficulties – but he also knew what measures would be appropriate to solve them. He played a key role in the process of building affiliate centers and other groups in developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In particular, Gallieno saw optics, especially its experimental aspects, as an important ingredient needed for building the research infrastructure and teaching capacity of physicists in developing countries. Even

though his own field of research was not optics, he saw its relevance for a number of areas of basic sciences, and, through the involvement of a number of interested people over the world, created a large optics community at ICTP. In particular, he used the ICTP College on Optics as a key mechanism for promoting research as well as training and educational activities in this broad field. His mode of operation was exemplary: he co-opted most optics societies across the world in this effort and was relentless in promoting the subject without being pushy. It is amazing that he built up lasting enthusiasm for the subject at ICTP, considering that the Centre did not have large local expertise; I believe that his *modus operandi* was most effective under the circumstances.

Gallieno assumed many other roles at ICTP. For instance, he had a special interest in Eastern Europe, with strong empathy for Central European cultures, particularly Slavic (he spoke fluent Slovenian) – and he devoted much energy to create working links with ICTP. Naturally, he had many friends in that part of the world. He was keen to nurture ICTP's relationships with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna; he considered it as vital and strategic. He built up programs of Sandwich Ph.D. degrees for students whose official registration would be in a developing country but with co-supervisors either at ICTP or in one of the other collaborating institutions.

In all these instances, Gallieno's vision was not grandiose but pragmatic and practical.

Last year, ICTP celebrated "Africa Day" at the instance of the Africa Department of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Several African scientists, young and old, spoke at the meeting. For those who knew Gallieno's involvement in Africa, it came as no surprise that the meeting turned out, unplanned, to be a celebration of his contributions to African science. Nearly everyone acknowledged the warmth and personal involvement that he evinced on ICTP's projects in Africa. In his unassuming way, he brushed off this honor simply by saying that people were exaggerating, and that he "could not have done anything without ICTP". Those who knew the details were aware that Gallieno deserved everything that was said of him that day.

Recently, ICTP organized a memorial day for Gallieno Denardo recently and released all the condolence messages and articles written about him. These messages can be found at the website: <http://portal.ictp.it/denardo> The

Centre also dedicated a classroom for his memory and converted the prize jointly given with the International Commission for Optics from its former name of ICO-ICTP Prize to ICO-ICTP Gallieno Denardo Prize. This prize is given annually to recognize an outstanding and young optics researcher in developing countries.

If we at ICTP (and others elsewhere) continue to emulate the traits that Gallieno Denardo exemplified through his steady work, we will have served his memory well.