

In Memoriam: Piero Villaggio

R. J. Knops

Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Mathematics, Heriot-Watt Univ., Edinburgh EH14 4AS, Scotland, U.K.

R. Ballarini, F. ASCE

James L. Record Professor and Head, Dept. of Civil Engineering, Univ. of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455 (corresponding author). E-mail: broberto@umn.edu

DOI: 10.1061/(ASCE)EM.1943-7889.0000788

This issue of the *Journal of Engineering Mechanics* includes the last paper submitted by Professor Piero Villaggio, who, after a short illness, died on January 4, 2014, in Rapallo, Italy.

Born in Genoa on December 30, 1932, twin to Paolo, Piero Villaggio obtained his degree in engineering from the University of Genoa in 1957 and in 1966 was appointed Chair in the Strength of Materials at the University of Pisa. There, he quickly became a prominent member of the prestigious group dedicated to continuing and enhancing the firmly established Italian tradition in continuum mechanics. Apart from visiting professorships at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Minnesota, and visits that included Heriot-Watt University, he remained in Pisa for his entire working life, teaching in both the university and the Scuola Normale Superiore. Upon official retirement, he was appointed to an emeritus chair in the university and was actively engaged in research until his untimely death. He was elected a full member of the Accademia dei Lincei in 2011.

Piero Villaggio was a leading world authority on elasticity, whose research covered fundamental theory, special problems, and, just as importantly, the history of mechanics. He strove for elegance in the

choice of problem, method of treatment, and style of presentation, whether in Italian or in English. He believed that in simplicity lay strength. One of his key abilities was perceiving the elemental but essential structure to any problem and then devising effective mathematical means by which crucial features could be identified. He served on numerous editorial boards and was the author or coauthor of more than 100 research papers published by internationally renowned journals. His scholarly erudition is demonstrated admirably in his three books: *Qualitative Methods in Elasticity* (Noordhoff 1977), *Mathematical Methods for Elastic Structures* (Cambridge University Press 1997), and the monumental *Die Werke von Johannes Bernoulli I: Mechanics* (Birkhauser 2007).

Although a demanding teacher, Piero gave generously of his time in the education and unfailing support of his students, inspiring many to develop their own highly successful careers. He was extremely open and hospitable. His conversation was never dull or repetitive, and was certainly not self-centered. He could summon from a retentive memory an immense array of unfamiliar but telling facts culled from a comprehensive knowledge of philosophy, history, politics, and literature. His other great and abiding passion was rock climbing. His skill, daily honed between 12:00 and 2:30 p.m., led to considerable and well-deserved fame.

Throughout his career, he received the undiminished loyalty and encouragement of his wife, Omi, without whom his achievements would not have been as significant. Sincere sympathy is extended to her. The entire scientific community has lost an esteemed colleague, original thinker, and valued friend who conducted his affairs with integrity. The loss is irreplaceable, but our memory of him is indelible.