

FOREWORD

SAIt owes a lot to Nichi D'Amico.

It owes him the attention with which He has always followed our activities and it owes him, above all, his suggestions, which aimed at making SAIt grow along a path of autonomous development.

Also as President of INAF, Nichi has always taken part in the meetings promoted by SAIt, the latest of which last year, at the "Accademia dei Lincei", when we celebrated the 100 years of life of our Society.

Since we are now accustomed to think that behind every action it is possible to sniffle out an interest or even the search of usefulness, I wondered in various occasions why the President of the National Institute of Astrophysics, to whom the Law entrusts the Responsibility of Research and dissemination of results, paid attention to the Italian Astronomical Society. The answer I gave myself is that Nichi had identified in SAIt the Academy in which science is combined with history and pre-university education. We can all –more or less- hold a public conference to talk about our research work, but teaching is something else. It is a matter of arousing the interest of an audience –often made of young people- who do not get caught by the beautiful images, which they can easily find on Internet. It is also a matter of introducing concepts which are far away from the daily experience, and require the mastery of suitable mathematical tools. Nichi had realized that this activity can be carried out by a community of researchers and teachers, who continuously exchange their experiences. And he generously engaged in these intuitions, as always.

As, responding to a IAU notice of competition, we proposed to create the Office for Astronomy Education, he gave us all his support, and engaged INAF when one of the initial partners, ASI, felt unable to take part in the joint effort.

This volume of the Memorie stems from the wish not to forget the experiences of many of us. Nichi's scientific activity will – obviously – remain in his publications, but human relationships, the character, the objectives, the motivations can only be derived from the contributions which we decided to gather in this volume.

The friendship which many of us have shared in this volume seems to me like a feeling which refuses to remain intimate, and emerges as a sign of respect and deep esteem.

Roberto Buonanno

President of Italian Astronomical Society

