

From Stanley Deser, Brandeis _____

“I knew Sergio since the mid-fifties, when he was already one of the sparkplugs of modern physics in Italy, a role that eventually extended to the whole world, both when he was here in Boston, and of course at CERN. Every time I came to TH, I would learn much about both physics and society from him; he was wise without being world-weary. Those generations of “Jewish-Torinese-Italian” culture had some very remarkable exemplars. Sergio’s contributions to our field are of course gigantic, from multi-peripheralism (the source of many later endeavors) through current algebra (likewise) to modern string theory. His was a very sad end, but the life a shining example.”

From Claudio Rebbi, Boston University _____

“I would like to express all my appreciation and gratitude to Sergio, who was first my teacher and advisor at the University of Torino, and then my mentor and friend through life. The physics I learnt from him inspired my research and my own teaching and whatever contribution of value I may ever have produced in science owes enormously to the insights I got from him.”

From Bruno Coppi, MIT _____

“I regret that a recent unexpected commitment forced me to cancel my trip to Geneva and be with you for this unique opportunity to celebrate Sergio’s life and achievements. Sergio played a key role in my professional and private life.

In particular, Sergio was of great help to Viki Weisskopf in opening a position as a full professor in plasma physics for me and was effective in persuading me, attracted by his bubbling personality and that of Bruno Rossi, to leave Princeton and join the MIT physics department in its golden age.

At MIT Sergio, Gabriele Veneziano and I had many enjoyable conversations in Italian to explain to each other, in simple language, what we were trying to accomplish in our own different types of research. This habit continues to these days as during the latest visit to MIT by Gabriele, who immediately informed me of his thoughts on primordial magnetic fields.

An important event in our relationship is the crucial help that Sergio gave me in 1972. My wife Maria had developed a serious case of pneumonia, which did not respond to antibiotics and could not be identified among previously known cases. Her condition had deteriorated rapidly and was becoming critical. One morning I met Sergio near the MIT Library and he realized that I was deeply distressed. After learning of the reason, he suggested a very bright doctor who had become his wife’s friend after what he had done for them and their daughter. The doctor went through the literature, guided by his colleagues, and very soon identified a very small group of similar cases (only 7 were known at the time) and found a way to bring my wife gently back from the brink.

Returning to professional matters, one of the main results of the experimental program that I had devised and developed at MIT had given surprising new results that allowed us

for the first time to propose and design the first experiment capable of reaching controlled ignition by fusion reactions in a deuterium-tritium plasma . Sergio, who at the time was well settled at CERN, understood the importance of this and immediately devoted his energies with great generosity to mobilize friends and colleagues, including John Adams, Franco Bonaudi, Sandro Fubini (his brother) and Romeo Perin, to develop a relevant program called Ignitor. To this day Ignitor remains the only experiment possible, employing existing technologies and knowledge of high energy plasma physics, which can attain the important goal of ignition and, in fact, the project has attracted a highly talented group of physicist and technologist to pursue it.

There are many of the less weighty circumstances that come to mind (for instance, the story of the excellent car that Sergio left me at a bargain price when returning to Europe and that I passed on to a student from his department in Turin after a few years of good service to my family) that I would have loved to share with you.

I was not prepared for Sergio's loss, and this makes it particularly painful to accept."

From So-Young Pi, Boston University _____

"I remember Sergio Fubini for his warmth and friendliness. On many occasions that he visited Boston without his family, he would soon declare how much he missed them. Once during a fancy meal in a restaurant he told us that he already missed Marina's cooking. He also said that he loved Marina, and was grateful to her for giving him Emma. Of course he loved Emma, but he always worried about her, for example about her motorcycle riding. So we thought that she is a wild girl. But one time when I hosted Emma around Boston while Sergio was lecturing, I saw that, on the contrary, she is a sensible, charming young woman. I told this to Sergio and he was happy to hear it. He also was very kind to our young son. Sergio entertained him during physics meetings in foreign countries by telling him a daily, different joke, and by playing board games with him. Sergio was the warmest and most sincere physicist that I have known."