

Professor Calogero Casuccio

(1909-2003)

Prof. Calogero Casuccio died suddenly on 12 August 2003. He would have turned 94 years of age on 22 October 2003; despite his age, he was in admirable health.

Casuccio stands out in the history of Italian orthopedics, especially because he represented a bridge – the last bridge – to the great Rizzolian epic of his teachers Vittorio Putti and Francesco Delitala, to whom he remained affectionate and devoted. With his own students, Casuccio perpetuated their teachings and their prestigious “Bologna school”, one-time symbol of Italian orthopedics throughout the world.

Casuccio was a character of great note in the orthopaedics world, even for his many faceted natural talents. His great skill as teacher is demonstrated by the group that he created in both university and hospital environments: 8 of his students obtained university professorships and innumerable others became directors of hospital departments.

One of his characteristics to remember with fondness is his extraordinary creativity. He always, and only, relied on himself with magnificent stubbornness and he worked hard with enthusiasm, ambition and farsightedness, without pause. These qualities permitted him to create, from scratch and under prohibitive conditions, the Orthopaedics Clinic in Bari, where he became Department Head in 1948. Here, he formed the flourishing department that made him the true loved father of orthopaedics in Puglia. He further demonstrated his abilities in 1956 when he transferred to the University of Padua. Here, in absence of an existing clinic, he once again created one from scratch, again among unspeakable difficulties. With great efforts he succeeded in creating a clinic that was a true masterpiece and that, at that time, was one of the most beautiful in the world.

As clinician, Casuccio represents the last of the leaders of a lost era when having a great teacher was a source of pride. Precise diagnostician and balanced surgeon, Casuccio taught his students, among many things, a fundamental concept that today is being forgotten: the absolute respect for patients in the choice of therapy.

Careful, punctilious, serious and reflective scholar, Casuccio’s scientific production was large and prestigious. Among his many works, we remember the important *Relazioni SIOT* (Reports of the Italian Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology) on osteochondritis and coxarthrosis, the *Trattato di Clinica Ortopedica* (a textbook of clinical orthopaedics) and, especially, the stupendous 1948 monograph *Osteopatie Rare* (rare osteopathies) that, for a long time afterward, met with extraordinarily success. We must not forget the beautiful journal *La Clinica Ortopedica* that Casuccio directed with love and devotion and that was the official journal of the Orthopaedics Clinic of Padua during its best years.

The respect that Prof. Casuccio earned as director of scientific and clinical activities of the splendid institute in Padua, and from him numerous trips abroad to international conferences, were justly recognized in 1975 with his election as President of SICOT, the International Association of Orthopaedic and Traumatologic Surgery. He was the first and only Italian to have ever obtained such a prestigious international role; this was an honor and source of pride for Italian orthopaedics.

Rigid lover of order and perfection, Casuccio was a severe critic of laziness and superficiality. He alternated his proper austerity as inaccessible professor with improvised jokes, made suddenly, without comment but with his ironic expression that was somewhat serious and partly facetious.

It is thus natural that even today, the great personality and talents of Professor Casuccio arouse, in everyone who loved him, sentiments of sincere admiration, affection and respect but also of recognition for everything that he did for orthopaedics and for its progress.

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