

PROFESSOR ENRICO CARLO VIGLIANI (1907-1992)

Enrico Vigliani one of the world's most outstanding figures in the field of occupational medicine, died on 7 February 1992.

He belonged to that great Italian tradition which emerged with the work of his eminent countryman Bernardino Ramazzini. He remained faithful to that tradition and always regretted that the influence of the Italian school of occupational medicine never achieved the level of international influence that it deserved.

For many years he directed the famous Clinica del Lavoro in Milan which has been internationally recognised as the cradle of occupational medicine.

He possessed one of those rare intellects which managed to penetrate the core of every problem and illuminate its essence.

In 1957 he assumed the post of Secretary General of the International Commission of Occupational Health (ICOH) previously held by Carozzi (who served from 1906). First under the Chairmanship of Sven Forssman, who died last year, and then under Leo Noro, who died ten years ago. From the moment he took over the post, Enrico Vigliani began the task of transforming an elitist medical club consisting of a handful of members in each country into a group of scholars of international standing and influence in the sphere of occupational medicine. He opened its doors to the nursing profession, hygienists and toxicologists.

He organised a series of research committees, most of which still continue to function, thus contributing to the pursuit of knowledge and academic excellence which always constituted his fundamental aim.

His scholarly works were characterised by signs of true genius. His path-breaking research on asbestos in 1940 ranks with Merewether and Price's report of 1930. Unfortunately, because of the war and the simple fact of his Italian nationality, that work did not attain the international circulation and recognition that it deserved. His studies on silica conducted jointly with Pernis, appeared considerably later and achieved that international recognition, as did his research on benzene, mercury and lead. He was the author of more than 100 scientific publications.

Notwithstanding his scholarly contribution, his name will remain etched on our memories, most of all because of his international role in the ICOH. He remained its Secretary General until 1975 and he served as its Chairman between 1975 and 1981 during a period of particular significance for its development.

Towards the end of his life his sight deteriorated, much to his great sorrow – not only because he could no longer keep up with new developments through the scholarly literature, but also because it forced him to abandon the game of golf which constituted one of his life's greatest pleasures.

Professor Enrico Vigliani was a close friend of the previous director of the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Lodz, Professor Jerzy Nofer, MD, and never failed to manifest his deep friendship for Poland.



Enrico Vigliani will be sadly missed, not only by those nearest to him but also by the world-wide family of occupational health specialists, who were the object of his concern and whom he represented for so many years.

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