

# FINAL WORD

*Professor Mario Mercuri passed away suddenly after a complication of cancer on 7 May 2011 after dedicating his entire life to patients with tumours.*



**B**orn on 7 December 1950 in Rovigo, a small town in Northern Italy, Mario Mercuri received his medical and orthopaedic education at the University of Bologna. There, he acquired his medical degree in 1967 and Board of Orthopaedics in 1980. From 1977 he worked at the Istituto Rizzoli where he became staff surgeon in 1979. He was trained by Professor Mario Campanacci, the founder of the Bone Tumour Centre of the University of Bologna at Rizzoli. In 1988 Mario became Associate Professor and, when Professor Campanacci died in 1999, he took his place as Chief of the department as well as Chief of the Musculoskeletal Oncology Department of Rizzoli.

During the 13 years that Mario Mercuri spent in this position he continued Campanacci's work and oversaw the growth of the department clinically and scientifically. He was an excellent surgeon, certainly one of the best ever seen at the Istituto Rizzoli. He was not only fully involved in the treatment of musculoskeletal tumours but was also a skilful and distinguished surgeon in traumatology, prosthetic reconstruction and complex joint revisions. In addition he was a true leader and was able to train the fellows and young surgeons who came to the Istituto Rizzoli from countries throughout the world.

Mario was a terrific chief and mentor for all who had the privilege of working with him and he was always able to share knowledge, cases,

and surgical skills with the surgeons in his department as well as his surgical partners. He was the author or co-author of more than 400 scientific papers published in national and international journals and was a speaker at more than 280 national or international meetings. His clinical and scientific contributions were impressive. Indeed, he was so active that when he died, Dr Franklin Sim of the Mayo Clinic stated: "Mario's place in history is certainly among the greats who led the Rizzoli Institute to its current fame."

Not only was Mario Mercuri a great surgeon and doctor, he also displayed many truly human qualities and was always able to do his best to encourage and help his patients. Hundreds of his patients and their relatives remember him more as a friend than a doctor. In his private life, although he dedicated most of his time to work and patients, he was a wonderful father and husband.

Mario Mercuri left us a valuable message. Throughout his life he gave us the gifts of enthusiasm and motivation – features that should always guide our professional work. His leadership and his personality will be severely missed.

**Pietro Ruggieri, MD, PhD, Professor**

*Rizzoli Institute, via Pupilli 1, Bologna, 40136, Italy*