

Carlo Mazza: the 2006–2007 ISPN President

Massimo Caldarelli

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Carlo Mazza was born on August 29, 1942 in Verona, Italy during World War II, an event which strongly influenced him up the early 1950s when his family was finally able to resume a normal life.

All his studies took place in Verona, a city he has always loved and could never permanently leave, even though he has had to leave for reasons of study, either to go to other places in Italy or abroad for long periods of time. It is as if the city were a true love: “there is no world without Verona walls but purgatory, torture, hell itself...” W. Shakespeare; *Romeo and Juliet*, Act III.

After high school (where he was a proud supporter), he graduated in Medicine and Surgery in Bologna in 1967 with an experimental thesis in nuclear medicine (Fig. 1).

M. Caldarelli (✉)
Section of Pediatric Neurosurgery,
Catholic University, Medical School,
Largo A. Gemelli 8,
00168 Rome, Italy
e-mail: mcaldarelli@rm.unicatt.it

The decision to become a neurosurgeon goes back to his getting to know Prof. Renato Da Pian whom he had spoken to regarding his future prospects as a young doctor. He met the professor through family connections, and it was this meeting that would influence to become a neurosurgeon.

Prof. Da Pian was then an assistant head to Prof. Dalle Ore (Fig. 2) at Verona Hospital, one of the first institutes for neurosurgery in Italy established by the Prof. Dalle Ore himself in 1958 who, along with Prof. Da Pian, left Padua to come to Verona.

There can be no doubt that Prof. Dalle Ore’s captivating personality was very influential in Carlo’s decision upon graduating to become part of the neurosurgery unit along with two other young doctors with whom a profound, lifelong friendship would develop. This is also where Carlo met and immediately admired the young, already brilliant neurosurgeon Dr. Bricolo who has gone on to become one of the most famous neurosurgeons in the world (Fig. 3).

Carlo Mazza’s started his professional training with great enthusiasm for neurosurgery in a department that was in full evolution, at a time when neurosurgery was developing and taking various forms as sub-specializations of neurosurgery. Indeed, sub-specialization was taking concrete form in Verona due to the long-term vision and organizational expertise of Prof. Dalle Ore and the deep involvement in vascular neurosurgery by Prof. Renato Da Pian (Fig. 4), in interventional neuroradiology by Prof. Aldo Benati, and in lower cranial and spinal surgery by Prof. Albino Bricolo.

After completing his specialization in neurosurgery with Prof. Rossi at the University of Genoa and in neurology with Prof. Terzian at the University of Padua, Carlo began to be increasingly interested in paediatric neurosurgery (Fig. 5), and as a result, he spent a period at what was then considered the most prestigious hospital in the world for such subspecialty, The Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago.



Fig. 1 Bologna University Medical School 1967, Carlo (*left*) at graduation

In 1973 and 1974, he stayed in Chicago for various months and got to know Prof. Anthony J. Raimondi who was to become his first true “maestro” and for whom Carlo felt great esteem and affection. They became personal friends when Prof. Raimondi moved to Italy, to the Verona area, where, unfortunately, he died in June 2000.

In Chicago, Carlo met and formed friendships with various neurosurgeons who would become important names in pediatric neurosurgery, including Proff. David McLone,



Fig. 2 University of Padova 1957, Dalle Ore (*left*) with Frugoni



Fig. 3 Department of Neurosurgery, Verona, 1968: neurosurgical staff

Kiyoshi Sato and Shizuo Oi (Fig. 6). Another important figure, a man who would become Carlo’s dearest and most respected friend was Prof. Ezio Di Rocco, with whom he developed a sincere and brotherly friendship. Carlo’s professional and cultural respect for Prof. Ezio Di Rocco (Fig. 7) has been a determining factor in Carlo’s life.

A further way very important period of his training was in pediatric neurosurgery in Marseilles, with Prof. Maurice Choux, at the *Hôpital des Enfants de la Timone* (Fig. 4).

Carlo loves to say that Prof. Choux was not only a prestigious paediatric neurosurgeon and among the founders of ESPN and ISPN but he was also a tireless force in improving the specialization, and well known all around the world, and that he was a key figure in bestowing dignity to the profession of paediatric neurosurgery as a true and proper specialization degree course within neurosurgery. Even today, Prof. Choux remains a cultivated man with great humanity, an impassioned Egyptologist, a connoisseur of music and a person who is endowed with a great personal charm: This is the “Maestro” who Carlo will never forget.



Fig. 4 From the left to the right, Maurice Choux, Anthony Raimondi, Carlo Mazza and Renato Da Pian



Fig. 5 Pediatric Intensive Care Unit

In Marseilles, Carlo met and became friends, as he still is today, with Gabriel Lena and Charles Raybaud, neurosurgeon and neuroradiologist, respectively.

In 1981, with the support of Ezio Di Rocco, Carlo became part of ISPN, in 1982 at the first Congress of Philadelphia with a paper on the treatment of paediatric AVMs with Prof. Fred Epstein (Fig. 8) as discussant. On following study periods, he would meet up with Fred Epstein in New York where he also met Rick Abbot, who has been a dear friend since.



Fig. 6 Carlo Mazza (left) and Shizuo Oi

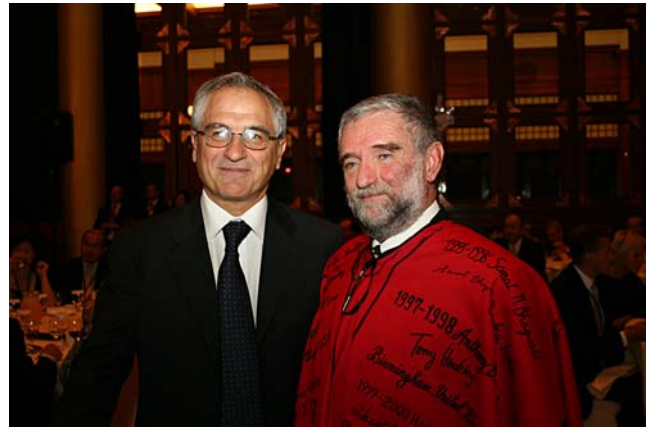


Fig. 7 Concezio Di Rocco (left) and Carlo Mazza

In 1990, he stayed in Phoenix as a guest of Harold ReKate of BNI with whom he has a dear and long-lasting friendship.

Carlo has often been involved with the activity of ISPN through various roles (Scientific Subcommittee, Nominating Subcommittee, Scientific Committee, Secretary, President Elect and finally President in 2006 at the Annual Meeting in Taipei; Fig. 9) and as such is a noted presence for the Society also for his regular attendance at the meetings, for his suggestions in the E.B., and for the good governance of the ISPN, and his friendliness and courtesy with all colleagues. Together with Prof. Raimondi, he organized in the 1997 IPSN Annual Meeting in Verona.

Not only is he constantly active in the ISPN but he has also been a member of the ESPN since 1980 where he has had various responsibilities (Membership Committee, Secretary and, at present, Historian).

In 2003, he was head of the Italian group of Paediatric Neurosurgery for S.I.N.C. (The Italian Society of Neurosurgery).

In the area of scientific research, Carlo Mazza has published about 100 articles, mostly in international journals in various fields of paediatric neurosurgery, as well as participated actively in ISPN and ESPN Congresses, not to



Fig. 8 Carlo and Fred Epstein (right) with Fred's wife



Fig. 9 President of the ISPN, Taipei 2006, J.U. Choi former President on the left



Fig. 10 Verona 1969, Carlo's wedding



Fig. 11 Carlo and his daughters Camilla (*left*) and Ludovica (*right*)



Fig. 12 Violetta, Carlo's granddaughter

mention national and international congresses. As a faculty member, he has been involved in many ESPN and ISPN post-graduate courses.

Since 2000, he has been Director of Paediatric Neurosurgery in the Department of Neurosurgery at Verona Hospital, and he is a professor of Paediatric Neurosurgery in the Specialization Schools of Neurosurgery, General Paediatric Surgery, Child Neuropsychiatry, Neurology and Paediatric Oncology.

A description of Carlo Mazza, the man, must necessarily include his interpersonal skills and the fact that he is plainly an extrovert.

Carlo Mazza married Loredana in 1969 (Fig. 10), and they are a happily married couple with two daughters, Camilla and Ludovica (Fig. 11), with the latter daughter following in his footsteps at various congresses: Many Members of the ISPN recall the similarities in character with her father. Carlo is very proud of the fact that he is a grandfather to his adored Violetta (Fig. 12) who was born to Camilla and Fulvio in 2002.

Another important aspect of Carlo Mazza's character is his love of the mountains and of sport and sporting activities in general, including skiing and mountaineering (Fig. 13). It has been said that perhaps he loves the



Fig. 13 Carlo and Loredana in Senales Valley, winter time

mountains more than neurosurgery, and if we asked him, he would probably answer in the affirmative.

This passion led him to choose for his Presidential Address in Liverpool in 2007 a rather unusual topic: the history of the mummy discovered in on Similaun in 1991 (Fig. 14), a mountain in Alto Adige and a region that is dear to Carlo Mazza since it is where his mother's family comes from.

Along with his passion for the mountains, Carlo is also a motorcycle enthusiast (Fig. 15). He is part of a group of



Fig. 14 Oetzi, the Similaun Man



Fig. 15 ...on the bike

bikers (another member is the neuroradiologist who works alongside him in the Department of Neurosurgery in Verona) who enjoy themselves in various trips, with Loredana accompanying him on the back of his Moto Guzzi California.

Finally, no description would be complete without mentioning Carlo's love for classical music, from Baroque to modern. Above all, Carlo adores Mozart of whom he says he knows everything, and in fact, he has the entire collection of Mozart's works along with a substantial biography. And it is not only Mozart, as Carlo also has an obsession for Maria Callas, and he has admitted to me that every year, on her birthday, December 2, (the same as Loredana's!) he always listens to a song by the divine one herself, Maria Callas.