In Memoriam: Professor Giuseppe Ruffino (1923–1993)

Thermophysicists throughout the world lost a respected colleague, a scholar, and a good friend when Professor Giuseppe Ruffino died unexpectedly on January 16, 1993, at the age of 70. The international thermophysics community is left without one of its major inspirers and contributors.

Giuseppe Ruffino was born in Neive (Italy) on December 19, 1923, in a family of strong Roman Catholic traditions. Educated at the Salesian
School in Torino, he discovered his religious vocation at a young age. During World War II he attended the Salesian Seminary and was a physics teacher in Portugal. He was ordained priest in the Salesian Order in July 1949 and received a "summa cum laude" degree in Theology in 1951. His enthusiasm for exact sciences took him to the Politecnico of Torino (Italy), where he graduated "cum laude" in Electrical Engineering in 1954. His part-time academic involvement continued at the Politecnico through the years as a lecturer on Physics Laboratory (1954–1955), Thermal Measurements and Control (1960–1961), Experimental Physics (1961–1966), and Cryogenic Engineering (1966–1981). He became a full professor of Technical Physics at the University of Rome "La Sapienza" in 1981 and at the University of Rome "Tor Vergata" (after 1983).

Until 1983, the academic career had been a part-time activity secondary to his main profession as a scientist in governmental and industrial research laboratories. The former had been carried out at the National Research Council of Italy (CNR; 1955–1957; 1959–1970) and at the Istituto Elettrotecnico Nazionale "G. Ferraris" (1957–1959); the latter, at the companies Leeds & Northrup Italiana (1970–1979) and Microtecnica (1979–1983).

Within the CNR, he was instrumental in founding and developing the Istituto Termometrico Italiano (ITI; 1956–1968) until it merged into the Istituto di Metrologia "Gustavo Colonnetti" (IMGC) in 1968. As the Director of ITI, he managed and carried out research programs, constructed metrological equipment, and trained researchers that now occupy key positions in the IMGC.

As the Director of Research and Development in the Leeds & Northrup Italiana, he carried out research projects on infrared and visible radiation thermometry. He developed some pyrometers of novel design, and from 1973 to 1979 he directed the Leeds & Northrup Laboratory of Torino for thermometric research.

In the Microtecnica (Torino, Italy) he built an optical laboratory for testing optics, which includes a Modulation Transfer Function measuring machine of a novel design. He also supervised all the metrological activities of the firm.

He was an untiring consultant, in instrument design and construction, to several major research laboratories: NBS (presently NIST, USA), Euratom JRC (Karlsruhe, Germany), NPRL-CSIR (South Africa), and Harbin Institute of Technology (PR China). He authored more than 80 papers on the following subjects: material properties (thermal expansion, melting points, emissivity, photoelectricity), optics applied to length measurements and to radiometry, electronics applied to physical measurements, and thermometry, particularly radiation pyrometry.