In memory of Paolantonio Marazzini (Milan, 12 November 1940 - Milan, 1 June 2013)

Paolo graduated with a Chemical Technology Diploma from the ITIS Ettore Molinari in Milan. The following year, he prepared for the state exam to qualify for the Scientific Lyceum. In 1960, he became a student at the Collegio Ghislieri of Pavia. It was the year when I was still attending college as a "perfecting" graduate. In this capacity, contacts with first-year students were almost non-existent.

After graduating, he spent a year at the Institute of Nuclear Physics but felt out of place there. Following his military service, he took the competitive exam for a physics professorship at a high school. Then, he taught for a year at the Technical Institute of Monza before transferring to the ITIS Molinari in Milan. This decision was driven by his firm belief that teaching physics without access to an experimental laboratory was not feasible. At that time, the sequence of events – earning a degree, a brief stint at university, military service, taking the competitive exam, and securing a professorships – was quite typical for bright young individuals. The current dire state of teacher recruitment highlights one of the most notable failures of those who have governed our country over the past forty years, as well as those who have prioritized corporate interests over the education system.

The outbreak of the 1968 student protests found Paolo, then a young teacher under thirty, at Molinari. While open to students' demands, he steadfastly defended individual rights, ensuring students who chose not to join occupations could still access the institute. Having experienced similar events at the University of Pavia, I am well aware of how difficult and costly it was to maintain this delicate balance.

At Molinari, his colleague Eugenio Stocchi, formerly Paolo's chemistry teacher, who had ties to the Atlas publishing house in Bergamo – proposed that Paolo write a high school physics textbook. This event marked the beginning of his prolific, multifaceted career as a textbook author, which continued until the end. In recent years, however, Paolo grew frustrated with publishers' increasingly restrictive demands; he planned to stop after fulfilling his final commitment.

Faithful to his vocation, Paolo critically monitored school reform efforts while actively participating in teacher training initiatives. Exemplary in this regard were his contributions to projects by the Pavia branch of the Italian Physics Teachers Association (AIF), led by our mutual friend Vittoria

Cinquini. I am certain generations of students he taught and mentored at Molinari until his retirement (2000) will not forget him.

I reconnected with Paolo in the early 1990s. If memory serves, the occasion was a series of teacher training workshops organized by Fabio Bevilacqua. Thus began an intense collaboration that lasted until the end – our last exchange of ideas dates to March that year. Paolo was an ideal collaborator when approached in the right way. We would begin with a discussion to outline research and identify key references. Then Paolo would work with an intensity and productivity that never ceased to amaze me. Early on, he abandoned handwriting for easier sharing, arriving with floppy disks of his files; later, email made exchanging materials effortless. His drafts were characterized by exhaustive research and preliminary analysis. Typically, I suggested three improvements: trimming excess material, reducing didactic emphasis in historically focused works to clarify the main thread, and refining his textbook-like writing style. To the last point, Paolo would say: "But this is how I write." Yet his style visibly improved over time. Paolo began every project with a clear didactic purpose – I soon realized this approach stemmed from an existential conviction.

We co-authored two works: the first and the last. For his solo publications, I had to insist my name not appear, as my contribution was merely that of a critical friend offering feedback. After incorporating my suggestions or proposing alternatives, work progressed swiftly; unresolved issues were discussed in meetings. His meticulous analysis often outweighed conciseness, leaving much of his material unpublished. Paolo also reviewed my drafts, offering sharp insights and substantive revisions.

In 1968, he married Eliana Consonni; they had two daughters, Francesca and Emanuela. Eliana also lovingly lent her name as co-author to physics textbooks Paolo wrote for teacher-training institutes – he refused to sign works where physics couldn't be presented as an inseparable weave of experiment and theory.

Raised Catholic, he drifted from faith around age thirty-five and later became a rationally convinced atheist.

His terminal illness was diagnosed thirteen years ago. He faced it courageously, determined to live fully without burdening loved ones. With scientific rigor, he joined an international experimental drug trial. Tragically, the treatment coincided with (or caused) his decline. His final weeks were arduous; our contact was limited to phone calls. He worked until three days before his death – a handwritten draft titled "Physics Concepts and Prob-

lems" remained on his desk. He last called me ten days before the end; we said our goodbyes. His ashes will be scattered in the mountains where he took solitary walks. Stars will shine upon the earth that welcomes him.