

## A memory of Professor Carmine Melino

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Naturally, Prof. Carmine Melino was and remains in my memory as one of those figures that can be defined as “a good person”. And this at a time when society has reached such a point of degradation where the most exalted are those who “we can do”, those who “know how to move”, who “are sharks ...”, who “know how to sell it” or “know how to make offers that cannot be refused”. Prof. Carmine Melino was not any of the figures just mentioned. No, he was a “good man”, in the most traditional sense, who knew and understood a great deal, including a lot more than he showed. And I think, in saying this, that I have already said a lot.

I was a junior high school friend of Gerry, his son, who later became a well-known molecular biologist. I met Prof. Carmine Melino during my years at the university, introduced to me by his son who, on that occasion, said: “*Carmelo (my name) listen to me: go into his Institute with Dad.*” No. I did not listen. I wanted to become a university professor in Internal Medicine or in Endocrinology. The result is that I did not become a university professor in either discipline. I joined the INAIL, the National Institute of Insurance against Occupational Accidents. There, again I met Prof Melino where he was External Consultant to the

Directorate General of INAIL. I always had a great liking for study in the specific medical areas – firstly Forensic and then Occupational Medicine. I had written for almost ten years a text about occupational cancer. And I went on writing, writing,

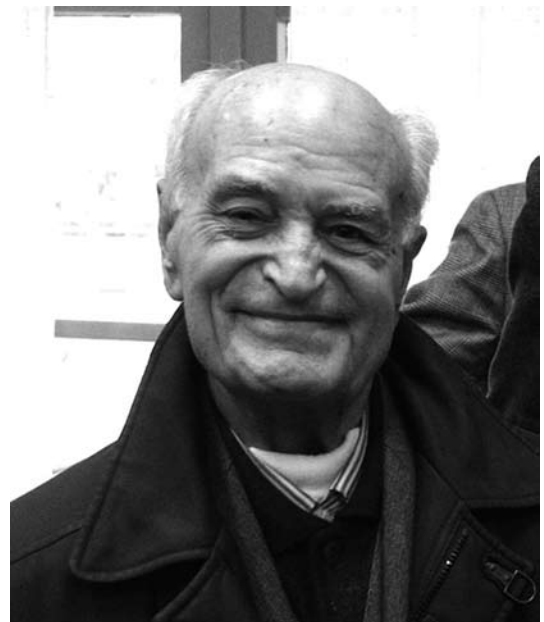


Figure 1 - Carmine Melino, always smiling ...

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writing. But who was going to publish it? But I needed an experienced person in the field, and knowledgeable in publishing, to make that massive manuscript easy and reader friendly. I was afraid to ask around, I was afraid that “my long work was going to be blown”, ... as often happens. I met Gerry again by chance and I told him my problem; he came up with his usual response: “*Talk with Dad.*” The outcomes in life are often reflections of pleasant coincidences. A few days later I met Prof Carmine Melino, since we lived nearby, and I gave him a copy of my long exhaustive (and exhausting) work. I told him about the book; I told him about the scientific questions, and of the advice from Gerry. He told me: “*Come to my house and we’ll talk*”. This was in 1998. Here we initiated two years of intense collaboration, continuous meetings between Prof Carmine Melino and myself to make all that material useful from a typographic point of view, and at the same time to update it, cut here, expand there and never miss sight of the first reference in such a complex area. Prof Melino urged me on and gave me no respite,

even calling me at seven in the morning to tell me that I had to go as soon as possible to his home because I had to give this or that book, this or that article, this or that table, the brochure of a conference on the subject or the Congress to attend, or the Proceedings of a Conference to read. They were two wonderful years - then followed by more years of scientific collaboration - where I learned so many things and so many I would have still wanted to learn that I know that he could teach me. Today when I think of him I remember him as a “good person”, the one who also supported me in many moments of bitterness and disappointment in life. Thinking of him remains to me a big regret for not having followed the recommendation at the university from my old school friend Gerry: “*Carmelo believe me, go with Dad in his Institute*”. There I left and abandoned this suggestion because I cultivated “castles in the air”, dreams to become Endocrinologist or Clinical at the University. But then, many years later, it was Professor Carmine Melino who helped realize the dream of our book.