Libertas Mathematica (new series)
Volume 43(2024), No. 1, 85-86

Remembering Andrea

Francesca Ceragiolli

I had the great fortune and privilege of being Andrea's student starting with some lectures he gave in a course at the University of Turin in 1994, where I was studying. I graduated with him, he was my PhD advisor and then we worked together for some years on discontinuous differential equations, nonsmooth Lyapunov functions and switched systems. Although at one point Andrea dismissed me, inviting me to work with others or alone, I cannot say that I stopped being his student because until our last meeting, which took place a few days before his death, he always taught me many things. Andrea, over the years, showed me many different types of Mathematics.

The first one was research. He liked big questions and small ones, which had perhaps escaped the gaze of those who had come before him. Passionate and tenacious when he tackled a problem, he often arrived in the morning with an idea or a computation and said that when he could not sleep at night: he thought about the math problem so as not to think about the more difficult problems of daily life.

The second is math that helps in putting in order. Working closely with engineers, he felt the need to contribute to the systematization and formalization of problems and results, sometimes treated without sufficient rigor. For this he was always highly appreciated by fellow engineers who remember him with admiration and affection. Then there was the mathematics to be taught, which Andrea knew how to modulate according to who was in front of him: from the kind that focuses on calculus and techniques to the more abstract kind that enables to see problems in their generality. For all the courses in which he taught, he wrote teaching texts that stand out for their clarity and interest raised through witty examples and counterexamples.

Finally, Andrea taught and made me appreciate mathematics for all. Tirelessly, he lent himself to devising accessible paths for school students and teachers on difficult topics such as measuring time, chaos, and visualizing geometric objects. Andrea was never content to give vague ideas, which may fascinate but easily escape. He always managed to transfer the ideas into something more concrete that could capture the beauty and power of mathematics: objects, constructions, calculations.

His life as a mathematician was fully consistent with his coherent, rigorous and welcoming personality: we miss him but he is still present with his teachings and

inspirations in the corridors, offices, libraries and classrooms of Politecnico di Torino.

Francesca Ceragioli
Politecnico di Torino,
Dipartimento di Scienze Matematiche "G. L. Lagrange",
Corso Duca degli Abruzzi 24,
10129 Torino, Italy
E-mail: francesca.ceragioli@polito.it