



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Education

Professor Joseph Falzon

An Appreciation by Professor Charles Farrugia.

I first met Joe when he, and a number of Education Officers, joined the remnants of the two banished teacher training colleges, to set the academic foundations for the newly established Malta College of Education. Joe was an education psychologist and he naturally looked after that area of the new course while I catered for the Principles of Education sections. Together with our colleagues, after the end of lectures at five, we spent endless evenings devising a new teacher education curriculum, one that would meet the demands of the UK National Council for the Academic Awards and the London Institute of Education, which provided us with external examiners.

As a British registered and fully certified educational psychologist, Joe could have taken up private practice and made a fortune. Instead, he chose to serve the Maltese education service to the full, laying the foundations for a core of local professionals in the field.

When the College of Education moved to MCAST as the Department of Educational Studies and the position of its Head fell vacant, Joe, I and several others applied for the post. Joe and I promised each other that if one of us was appointed the other would support the appointee to the hilt. I got the post, and true to his word, Joe became my valued advisor and lifelong friend, especially when we moved to Tal-Qroqq as the Faculty of Education. I recall then University Rector Professor George Xuereb telling me: "You are lucky to have Professor Falzon as second in command. Every word he utters is full of wisdom, make sure you heed his advice." This was not difficult to do since Joe's counsel was always reasoned out, down to earth and future oriented.

Professor Falzon was also an inspiring teacher, no-nonsense but always compassionate. Student-teachers were always delighted to have him as their teaching practice tutor because although he demanded high lesson preparation and delivery standards, his corrections were blended with practical pedagogical suggestions and words of encouragement. Joe always had the highest number of students' dissertations to supervise because in him students found excellent guidance and support.

When Professor Falzon became heavily engaged in setting up the University's MATSEC Unit and I moved to the Pro-Rector's office, our collaboration and friendship did not diminish. We met every Sunday morning with friends over drinks (starting with fizzy-water –to the amusement of patrons at other tables- followed by two or three shots of harder stuff) to discuss and solve (sic.) all local and international dilemmas. Joe's voracious reading especially his knowledge of Melitensia came to the fore, as did his subtle sense of humour.

I shall miss Joe, naturally not as much as his wife Hanna and his children, nor as much as his bother Alfred and his sister Lina. Malta has lost a true scholar, teacher and a gentleman with the highest moral values, although very few outside his sphere knew it because he was most reluctant to advertise his attributes. I have lost a true friend whose memory I shall always cherish. May he rest in peace, which he surely deserves.