

News Article

## In memory of Prof. Giuseppe Amato (1944-2004)

Giuseppe Crescimanno



Held by Prof. Giuseppe Crescimanno on November 25<sup>th</sup> 2014 at the Department of Experimental Biomedicine and Clinical Neurosciences University of Palermo, Italy.

Prof. Giuseppe Amato, full Professor of Human Physiology at the University of Palermo died ten years ago, after a life spent in high level research activities, and after several years of teaching and in the governance of various university institutions.

He had attended the Institute of Human Physiology of Palermo University, directed by Prof. Vittorio Zagami, since 1966. During this time, he learnt the basis of experimental neurophysiology, working in the laboratory directed by Prof. Vittorio La Grutta.



In 1971, he was appointed Ordinary Assistant and in 1973 he received the first university temporary lectureship at the Faculty of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences.

His first research revealed an inhibitory activity of the caudate nucleus on the auditory primary area in the cat, and on the complex relationships between pulvinar and suprasylvian cortex.

In 1976, he won a NATO Grant that allowed him to attend the Institute of Neurophysiology and Psychology of C.N.R.S in Marseille directed by Prof. Jacques Paillard. During this intensive period of work he collaborated with Prof. Paillard and Prof. Jean Massion studying the physiology of voluntary movement. After the NATO Grant, to conclude his research, he won a grant from the European Science Foundation for the European Training Program in Brain and Behavior Research. Among his principal findings, arising from the researches in Marseille, we remember the role of the internal segment of the globus pallidus and of the putamen on the beginning and execution of a voluntary oriented movement in the baboon.

When he returned to Palermo, his research concerned the inhibitory control exerted by the striatum on the amygdaloid paroxysmal activity.

In 1980, Prof. Amato became Full Professor in Human Physiology. At 36 years old, he was one of the youngest winners of a competition for full professor in Human Physiology in Italy. At that time his research concerned the role of the dopaminergic system in the control of aggressive behaviour and the influence of the claustrum on PTNs activity, in the cat.

During the following years, Prof. Amato was elected Sanitary Director of the University Policlinic "Paolo Giaccone", Dean of the School of Medicine, and Head of the Experimental Medicine Department. Despite his involvement in very important institutional activities, his interest in research was never archived.

He was an exceptional scientist and an unmatched teacher for many generations of students. For me, he was a generous friend and a stimulating colleague to whom still goes my gratitude and real affection.

Giuseppe Crescimanno, Palermo, Italy

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