

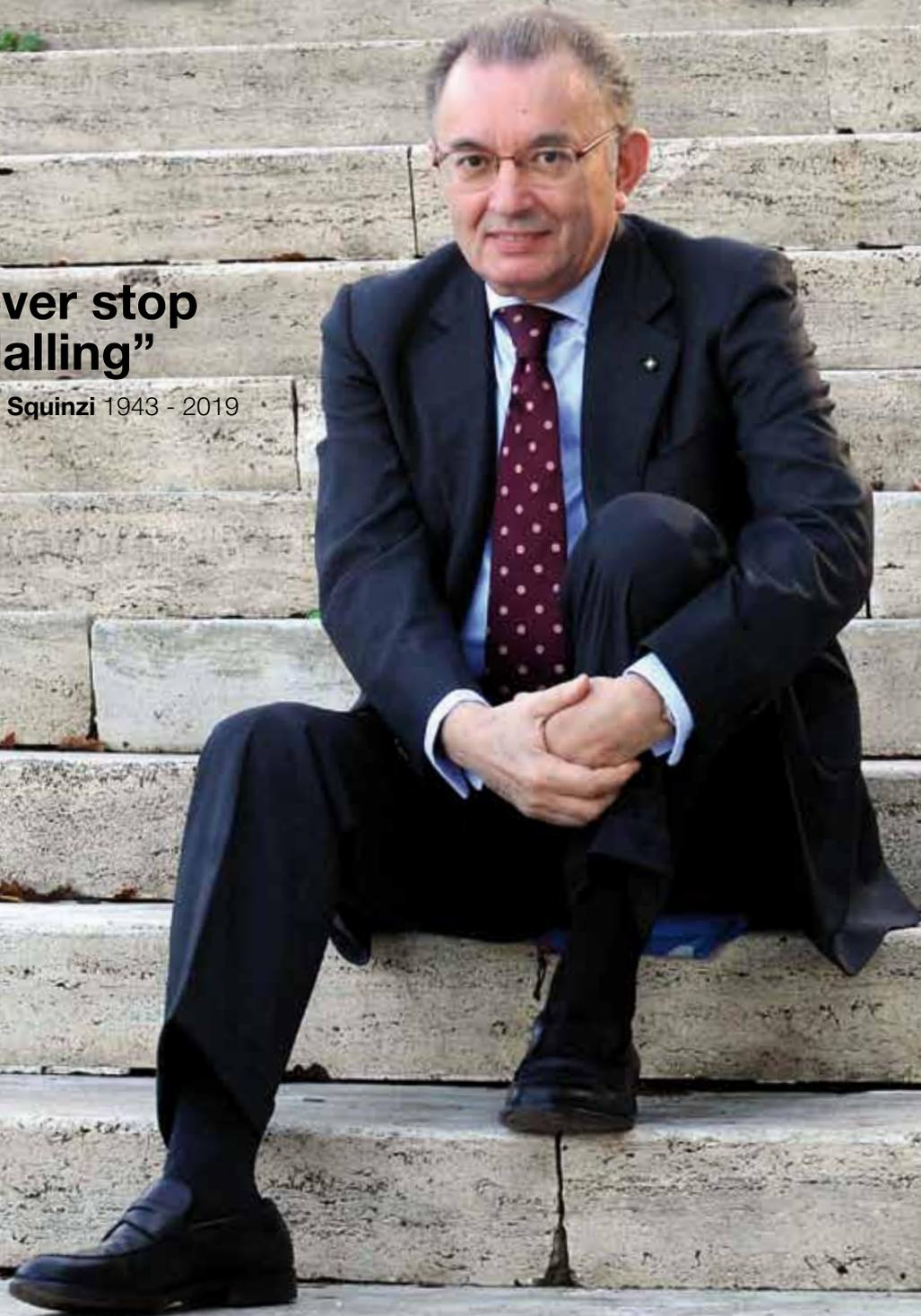
INTERNATIONAL

# Realtà MAPEI

ISSUE 77

**“Never stop  
pedalling”**

Giorgio Squinzi 1943 - 2019







**ADRIANA  
SPAZZOLI**  
*Realtà Mapei  
International's*  
Editor-in-chief

## Farewell Giorgio.

That is the title we have chosen to open this special supplement to *Realtà Mapei International*, a title we wish we did not have to write. Giorgio Squinzi, the President of the Mapei Group, left us on the evening of 2<sup>nd</sup> October: a life divided between his family, company, business associations, sport, culture and social work. His motto “Never stop pedalling” epitomised his approach to both work and life.

Giorgio Squinzi had lots of friends in all those realms to which he contributed his expertise, rigour, passion and humanity; always in his own sober and unobtrusive style that conveyed such great charisma and respect. He knew how to listen, and people listened to him. We have asked some of the friends who accompanied him on life's journey to give us their own personal recollections of the man. Memories we have collected in the pages of this special supplement to *Realtà Mapei International*; all these words and stories clearly demonstrate the great affection people had for Giorgio Squinzi in the most disparate of realms.

His expertise, precision and passion will now be taken up by his children, Veronica and Marco, who were appointed as Chief Executive Officers in July 2019.

They will lead the group along the path first trodden with such far-sighted vision by Rodolfo and then Giorgio Squinzi that made Mapei great all over the world.

Enjoy your reading everybody.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adriano Spazzoli".

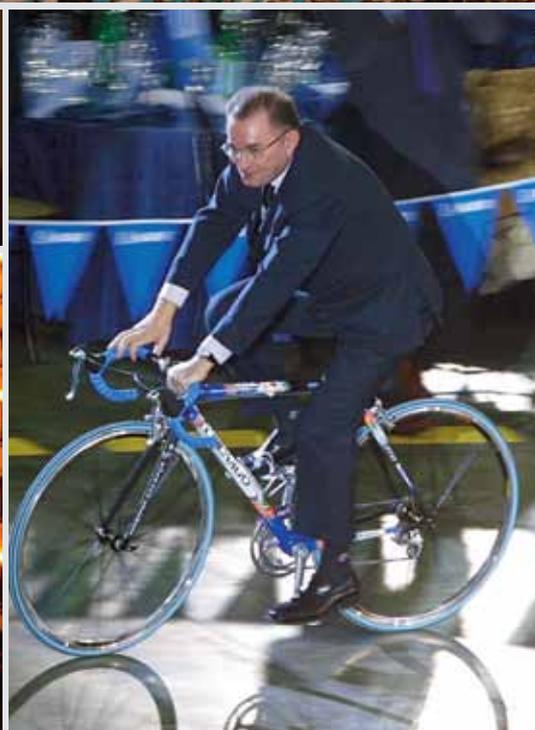
**LOTS OF HIS  
FRIENDS GAVE  
US THEIR OWN  
PERSONAL  
RECOLLECTIONS**



# Farewell Giorgio

Giorgio Squinzi, the CEO of the Mapei Group, passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. We would like to remember him by publishing the eulogies written by lots of his business friends, employees, and leading figures from the world of sport, culture and business.





# HOW MR. SQUINZI MADE MAPEI GREAT

by Carlo Pecchi

I first met Giorgio Giorgio Squinzi in May 1977 when I was introduced to him by my predecessor, Mr Rocco Fortunato. He made a great impression on me right from the start. His father, Mr Rodolfo Squinzi, was the Sole Administrator of Mapei back then. After that initial interview, I was hired on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1977 and I worked closely with him for about 10 hours-a-day for over 42 years.

When I first joined Mapei, it was an Italian family business employing about 70 people, including office staff and workers, and had income of just over 7 billion lire (equivalent to 3 million Euros). The company offices and manufacturing activities were all located at no.22, via Cafiero in Milan. The new manufacturing plant in Robbiano di Mediglia, in the outskirts of Milan, only opened the following year.

I would now like to talk about some of my own recollections and personal memories of this wonderful relationship. A few years after joining the company, the company had to change its administration, business and manufacturing systems to accommodate more modern

equipment. Thanks to the decision taken by Mr. Squinzi, Mr Fortunato and myself, we moved on from a "Litton" accounting system (little more than a typewriter) to the very latest IBM systems at that time (34, 36, and AS400), which revolutionised our way of working.

In 1978, Mr Squinzi decided it was time for Mapei to make its first major foreign investment. I remember all the problems we had transferring the corporate capital we needed to start operating in Canada. At the time there was a real squeeze on credit and numerous constraints on transferring capital. For a full 9 months we filled in forms and handled all the other paperwork required by the 2 banks we were working with without getting anywhere. We only managed to close the operation after Mr Squinzi met with the top executives of what was then called Banca Commerciale Italiana. At that time most of Mr Squinzi's work was carried out in the laboratory, where he was involved in research with a few trusted assistants. I often saw him testing out new products for himself or carrying out pull-test tests.

He was always completely at ease in the laboratory. Over the following few years investment in research, both by hiring young graduates/school leavers or buying the very latest equipment, laid the foundations for Mapei's success. Internationalisation was another extremely important activity. After setting up the first company in Canada, we founded nine companies across every continent in the 1980s.

It is worth mentioning the establishing of Mapei Arizona, which later became Mapei Corp. I can remember the difficulties we encountered during the first few years of this important venture. When we talked about it, I focused on the difficulties involved and suggested we might rethink this investment. Mr Squinzi's reply was categorical: "Pecchi, if we can't break onto the American market, we should not be in this business". Once again, he was right. We now have income of approximately 1 billion Euros in North America making extremely good profits.

His father Rodolfo died suddenly in 1984 and Mr. Squinzi took over full responsibility for all the operations of what was by now an international



Official opening of the manufacturing plant in Laval (Canada) in 1984.



Giorgio Squinzi with Carlo Pecchi.

Laying the first stone at the manufacturing plant in Montgru Saint-Hilaire in France.



group.

In 1987 we made an investment in Latina (central Italy) in order to carry out manufacturing closer to all our customers in central-southern Italy, setting up Mapei Centro Sud. This was not one of those investments designed to obtain government grant only to close down operations and emigrate overseas. Indeed, over 30 year after first opening, the plant in Latina is still a pride of our Group with its cutting-edge systems and a rising number of staff. Once again, you can see the visionary thinking of this great businessman. So now let's talk about cycling. We entered the world of cycling in 1992 because Mr. Squinzi, who was a keen amateur cyclist, believed it could be an important means of promoting our products. This investment lasted for about ten years. Here are some of my fondest memories from this great venture. The first time we took part in the Tour de France, we invited our most important customers to watch the final stage on the Champs Élysées in Paris followed by a dinner at the Tour d'Argent together with the entire cycling team. An unforgettable evening

with a final speech by Mr. Squinzi that all the customers who were there still remember fondly even today. A few years later I went with Mr Squinzi to Biarritz to watch the finish of another stage of the Tour de France. It was a Saturday and Mr Squinzi wanted to fly there in the morning, because he had arranged meetings with two important customers before enjoying the finish of the stage. In other words, he made the very most of his time because business was always in his thoughts. Mr Squinzi was extremely upset when he decided to abandon professional cycling. After 10 years at the very top of cycling with over 600 wins, he was betrayed by the sport he loved. He failed to beat doping, as he believed he could, because the rest of the top teams refused to follow his lead. Mr Squinzi had invested so much in the sport, even setting up a special company, Sport Service Mapei, together with the late and much-lamented Prof Sassi, with a view to cleaning up the sport. This company, which is now called Mapei Sport Center, is still fully-operational and helps both professional athletes and amateurs

improve their performances. After cycling came football with a major investment in Sassuolo Calcio. This was also intended to promote the company on the Italian market in particular. In football, just like in cycling, Ms Adriana Spazzoli played a key role in making the most of these opportunities on a promotional/media level. Once again, Mr Squinzi was not content to just invest in advertising, he wanted to create something that would last. As usual, Mr Squinzi wanted to do things properly to help young players develop with a view to the future. He took on a team in the lower echelons of Italian football and, year after year, got the club promoted through the various divisions (C2, C1, B and then A) until it eventually qualified for the Europa League. The hope was to play in the Champions League one day. A truly thrilling venture. In the meantime, Mapei bought a stadium in Reggio Emilia (in Italy only 3 football clubs own their own ground), which, with the help of further investment, has become one of the very few UEFA-approved stadiums in Italy. The Mapei Football Center was then



From left on. Rodolfo, Giorgio and Marco Squinzi.



Guido Trussardi, Roberto Boselli, Sergio Ceresa, Giorgio Squinzi and Luciano Trussardi.

*“He always treated all the staff in the same way, with a smile on his face. He was an optimist and even when facing difficulties, he managed to find a positive solution”.*

built in Sassuolo in 2019, a real jewel in the crown, where all Sassuolo Calcio's teams can now train. It can even be used by people from the local area. In the 1990s, as well as setting up new companies all over the world, Mr Squinzi's strategic vision led to the purchasing of important companies:

- Vinavil from the Eni Group in 1994. This was also a winning gamble. The company, which was almost dead and buried at the time, was gradually revitalised over the years. I can remember the months of work before the acquisition, the negotiations with Enichem Synthesis, and the day we finally closed the deal: there were plenty of executive managers from Enichem and our company at the table. Talking about the manufacturing plants, none of the sales people were well-informed about the location of the plants, while Mr Squinzi was the only person who knew exactly what the deal was about after just one visit.
- Mapei Ag (now Mapei Suisse) again in 1994. The company had plants for manufacturing powdered milk. With great foresight, Mr Squinzi immediately

realised these plants could be converted to manufacture an important ingredient in powder form that could serve the entire Mapei Group.

- Gorka was purchased from the Polish Government in 1999. The company was on the verge of bankruptcy and had obsolete plants. The suppliers no longer trusted the company and wanted to be paid in advance for their supplies. Once again, the situation was turned around by Mapei's intervention. Gorka now has some extremely efficient plants for manufacturing a certain kind of cement and can boast a notable turnover with excellent profits.
- The purchasing of the Rescon Group in Norway in 1999 was intended to extend the Mapei range of products in the booming sector of alkali-free accelerating admixtures for concrete mainly used for underground engineering projects such as in tunnels. This operation allowed Mapei to make its mark in this market.
- Mr Squinzi was determined to take over the Sopro Group in 2001. Sopro was part of the German cement manufacturing colossus Dyckerhoff,

which, for in-house reasons, had to sell its non-cement-based operations. They suggested the takeover should happen in November 2001, with the deadline for closing the deal set as 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001. There was very little time to make such an important acquisition. Mr Squinzi immediately organised the takeover, dividing up the work inside our company between a number of teams specialising in manufacturing plants and commercial, legal, administration and financial operations. I was involved in the latter and I can remember the final meeting at the headquarters of Credito Italiano (now Unicredit) in piazza Cordusio in Milan attended by Mr Squinzi, Mr Profumo (Unicredit) and myself. The deal was successfully concluded. We managed to transfer the money for the acquisition by 30<sup>th</sup> December 2001.

- Finally, another important takeover I can remember was Polyglass in 2008, a company operating in the field of bituminous and synthetic membranes. Mr Squinzi was equally committed when it came to representative organisations. He was elected



Visit to the Mapei plant in Latina (built in Central Italy in 1987) during the “Open Factories” event held in 2011.



Giorgio Squinzi with Luciano Longhetti (at the time Managing Director of Vinavil) in 1994, when Vinavil was acquired by Mapei



President of the Italian Federation of Chemical Industry Associations in 1997 with 99% of the votes. His time in office was extremely successful and he was reappointed for a further four years. After a two-year break, he was re-elected with the same landslide vote for a third four-year term in office. The Italian Federation of Chemical Industry Associations was the presidency he loved most. Mr Squinzi had chemicals in his blood, and he was extremely proud to be able to do something for his own sector.

He supported the Federation's "Fabbriche Aperte (open factories)" activities, which he saw as opportunities to meet with both staff and local people. On these occasions, Mr Squinzi made sure all the manufacturing plants were fully committed.

He was then elected President of Confindustria, the Confederation of Italian Manufacturing and Service Companies, from 2012 to 2016. He never really enjoyed the political-industrial climate in Rome and, poignantly, on the day of his official reconfirmation for a two-year term

in office, he decided to dine with members of his family and Mapei staff and not the leaders of the Confederation.

Another extremely important issue was Mr Squinzi's determination to drive home the concept of "quality" in all the staff. Mapei was the first Italian company in our industry to be awarded ISO 9001 certification and all Mapei subsidiaries, even those in the most remote locations, are certified or in the process of being certified.

I would like to point out that in all the interviews he gave Mr Squinzi was always quick to point out that there had been no collective dismissals or redundancy packages at any Mapei companies. I can confirm that that is entirely true, but I would also like to add that the Group's Italian companies all have their tax bases in Italy (i.e. they pay their taxes in Italy) without transferring capital into tax havens as many other business people, even from extremely well-known companies, have done over the last few years. This proves just what a serious Entrepreneur with a capital "E" he really was.

It was inspiring to work so closely with Mr Squinzi. I got the chance to admire his incredible work skills and the way he was able to focus on concrete things with no-frills; he was, as they say, always 'on the ball'. He always treated all the staff, both executives and ordinary workers, in the same way. He always had a smile on his face and a few words of encouragement when required. He was an optimist and always saw the glass half full. Even when facing difficulties (and there are always hard times in life), he managed to find a positive solution. And this influenced all of us. His favourite motto was to "never stop pedalling", which really summed up his way of life. I would like to end with a personal recollection: in mid-September this year, I caught pneumonia. Despite the fact that Mr Squinzi was so seriously ill, he called me every day to find out how I was feeling and encourage me to look after myself. That was Mr Squinzi. I will miss him, we will all miss him, so very much.

*Mapei Group's CFO.*



Giorgio Squinzi with Michael Hecker and Andreas Wilbrand at an event organised by Sopro, the group taken over in 2001.



Visit to a Polyglass plant, a group taken over in 2008.



by Roberto Boselli

## NOTHING WAS IMPOSSIBLE

I am rather reluctant to talk about my relationship with Mr Squinzi because, quite apart from the fact I began working for him almost 42 years ago when I was little more than a boy, I will always cherish the extremely close relationship we had that became even closer down the years.

It was 1978 when I had my first job interview to join Mapei. The manufacturing plant in Mediglia was still being built and it was back when the company was about to expand worldwide and make internationalisation one of the great pillars of its growth. I will never forget that interview, a handful of minutes that could decide my future when I knew I had to make the best impression possible.

The interview was, in fact, with Mr Squinzi himself and his father Rodolfo Squinzi, the founder of Mapei. I immediately realised that they shared the same line of thinking about the company's future, but above all, I was delighted to see that they both had the gift of making everybody feel important. That was where Giorgio Squinzi's charisma came from. He knew how to motivate the people who worked alongside him and, above all, had the patience to listen to them in order to work together to solve the problems being faced. The kind of charisma built around very definite human values, so deeply entrenched that they were gradually passed on to the whole of Mapei over time, almost as if they were contagious.

He had a very simple and direct way of engaging you and encouraging you to give your best at all times. When Mapei took over its professional cycling team, Mr Squinzi gave me one of the team's racing bikes as a present and asked me if I wanted to go cycling on Sundays with him and his group of extremely keen fellow amateur cyclists, including some of my colleagues. I had never ridden a racing bike, just ordinary city bikes, and my sport had always been football. Nevertheless, I decided to join them for a ride around Brianza. I warned Mr Squinzi: "I have never ridden up a hill in my life!", to which he replied "do not worry, it is not particularly hard", even though everybody was already gasping and panting! He took me up two climbs, one of which, Colle Brianza, was an insurmountable climb for a beginner like me. I was the last to get to the top and I was completely shattered. Mr Squinzi was already there waiting for me with the others and everybody burst out laughing, him more than anybody, and then he said: "You see, I was right, it was not impossible!". Over all those years, when he taught me so much, helped me get on and encouraged me to do my best, Mr Squinzi was like a father or older brother to me. He was definitely an important male figure in my education and taught me how to get by in both work and life by simply following just a few simple rules: be honest, respectful, polite and always willing to help others.

These family values were conveyed to and shared by all of us and lie at the foundations of what has now become a multinational company famous worldwide.

His visits to the manufacturing plant in Mediglia, extremely frequent before he took on important official posts during the later period of his life, were extremely helpful professionally for me and all the staff, but above all they were extremely happy moments.

He knew everybody and always exchanged a few words with all of us. There are plenty of stories that now come to mind at this time of deep suffering, but one stands out in particular. After twenty years working in the same place, I began to travel around the world and on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 I happened to be in the United States during the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers. Stuck in the USA over the days following that disaster, I tried to get back to Italy by driving down to Mexico. Mr Squinzi and his wife Adriana called me several times a day to make sure I was alright and advise me how to get back to Italy.

Knowing you belong to a Group that will never abandon you is extremely important, and it is even more important to feel the warmth of a family that is always by your side when things are difficult. And that is another reason why I really miss Mr Squinzi now.

*Mapei Operations Group Director*

# OUR GET TOGETHERS IN AMERICA: WORK AND BOAT TRIPS

When I think about Giorgio, a flood of memories come to mind from over 40 years of a very close friendship. It is really hard to pick out one that really gives a good idea of who he was and why everybody loved and respected him so much. Even finding a simple adjective to describe him seems impossible to me. Giorgio Squinzi was simply legendary. When he occasionally came over to visit us in the United States, he used to make a speech to the staff, who would listen to him with great emotional engagement. His words conveyed real enthusiasm for Mapei, respect for work done well, and a desire to continue along the path we were all following together, from the very lowest levels to the very top. He was like a general addressing his troops and we would have followed him to the ends of the earth if he had asked us to. Because everybody knew that people always came first for him, he knew how to listen to without imposing his own views. Truth was the most important thing for him and, if need be, he could forgive mistakes with great kindness and compassion. When I spoke to him, I always felt really privileged. You were given the chance to express yourself by somebody who trusted, understood and was kind to you, a person who had plenty of patience and common sense. He only needed to take a quick glance to understand what was going on and he found something valuable in everything, people and things, a quality worth noting and respecting. In so many years of friendship I never heard him say a single word that was not full of gentle acumen.



by Nick di Tempora

He was the most intelligent person I ever met. When I attended meetings in the laboratories, I was astounded by the solutions he found to problems, his expertise and flexibility. He could magically come up with brilliant ideas just when they were needed. He had an inquiring mind and was interested in the surrounding world, in progress in all fields and possibilities that actually came to fruition. In his opinion, all this was perfectly embodied by the United States, a country Giorgio always loved. I enjoyed observing his enthusiasm, curiosity and admiration for beauty and innovation. Wherever I moved to live, there was always an apartment where he could stay, so that we could spend some time together outside of our urgent professional commitments for Mapei. I can remember a wonderful

boat trip we went on with our wives to Harbour Island during a visit to Florida. While we were out sailing, the captain spotted an uninhabited island. As the four of us prepared to explore it, the captain caught some lobster and then cooked some delicious spaghetti and Giorgio, who loved good cooking, was absolutely thrilled... He was a man who loved life, had a kind and honest heart, knew how to appreciate the good things in life and people's virtues and that is how I would like to remember him in my own private thoughts.

*Honorary President of Mapei Corp., the Group's US subsidiary.*

# “He was one of us”: how staff remem

“I first met Mr Squinzi in March 1989 at a job interview for Mapei. It was a small company at the time and we were one big family. Mr Squinzi was a kind of “father” figure, always ready to encourage us and teach us something new. He was always extremely respectful and kind. I can remember Mr Squinzi consoling and supporting me when my father passed away. I admired his great sincerity and his attention to people, and I feel very lucky to have known him”.

**Roberta Corti.** *Secretary, R&D Laboratory, Mapei SpA*



“For years I was Mr Squinzi’s personal driver after being his mechanic. Right until the very end he always had a smile on his lips, was ready to give advice and was always friendly with everybody, despite his busy schedule. He never made me feel different from him, because he always made everybody feel at ease through his kindness and simplicity. We often spoke about football and he promised me we would watch the Sassuolo-Inter Milan match together but, unfortunately, he did not make it. He was a wonderful person and I will miss him”.

**Luciano Consolo.** *Giorgio Squinzi’s personal driver*



Mr Squinzi was a special man and I spent almost half my life with him: I set off on a wonderfully exciting business journey with him 32 years ago (developing and launching Mapei’s line of products for the building industry all over the world), during which I learnt so much. As our relationship became closer, I got the chance to admire his humanity and humility, qualities which, alas, are rare in many of us, but not in him and his family. He was a great boss who became a friend and who always found time to listen to me. It only took a few

words or just a look in his eyes, a smile or a frown, for me to realize whether what I had in mind was a good idea or not. Even now, when I go up to the sixth floor of Mapei SpA’s offices, I cannot help looking over to the left towards his office. His armchair is, alas, unoccupied. I think about him every day. We have lost a great man who taught me so much. I will always remember him.

**Pasquale Zaffaroni.** *Product Manager, Mapei Building Line.*



I had the great fortune to spend over 40 year working alongside Mr Squinzi. I joined the company in 1973 as a chemical analyst with expertise in gas chromatography. In 1980 Mapei began researching into different types of cement and I gained plenty of invaluable experience. Under Mr Squinzi’s guidance we achieved remarkable results developing what were then innovative high-speed products.

How could I ever forget those meetings about international standards, when, due to my non-existent knowledge of English, I used to whisper the results of the work carried out in the laboratory, so that Mr Squinzi could simultaneously translate them as if he had been directly involved in the work himself?

And then there was his love of cycling. I vividly remember Mr Squinzi taking me on board the team car during a cycling race in the United States: it was a real treat for a great cycling fan like me. And cycling did not just mean sharing those incredible achievements of great champions but also our Sunday rides around the hills of Brianza. It was during one of these rides that Mr Squinzi acted as “my personal mechanic” to solve a problem that had forced me to stop and get off my bike.

He knew the names of all his staff, both in Italy and abroad, and when the opportunity presented itself, he would chat with everybody, always remembering to ask them about their families. More recently he told me of his frustration about

not knowing all the new employees personally, due to how big the company had grown. His office door was always open ready to listen to both business and personal problems, always ready to help solve either, even just by taking time out for a simple chat.

**Vittorio Riunno.** *Research & Development Lab, Mapei SpA*



I am honoured to be a member of his staff, because he was an exceptional person, a man with a big heart I always respected, liked and was grateful to, as if he were a father. He made us feel important, always asking how we were, how our work was going and often saying “thanks for everything”. When he came to visit us at the plant in Mediglia, he would eat with the workers and was always pleased to see us. He was always smiling, and you could tell from his smile just how honest he was.

**Ivo Cremaschini.** *QC Laboratory, Mapei plant in Robbiano di Mediglia (Italy)*



Mr Squinzi was always kind and polite, showing an interest in us as people and not just our work. He was a stickler for working the best way possible and was always pleased if we had any suggestions that might boost our efficiency. I remember once we were making boxes that were not perfectly straight when they came out of the machine. After I mentioned it, he immediately got somebody to call the supplier, who came over within the hour to solve what might have seemed an insignificant little glitch but was extremely important to Mr Squinzi. He was also very understanding when it came to our mistakes: a mistake was an opportunity to improve and learn more. He knew how to get the best out of people.

**Ruggiero Dimiccoli.** *Operator in the powdered products department at the Mapei plant in Robbiano di Mediglia*

# Remember him

I have always felt a real sense of belonging to the company ever since I first joined Mapei and met Mr Squinzi for the first time. That was back in Christmas 1995 when he and his family came over to wish me the season's greetings while I was busy at work. Mr Squinzi always tried to interact with the workers and often asked technical questions. He was an enlightened person, who built a company in which I did not just grow professionally but also as a person. He has always felt a very powerful sense of sharing, both in his work and also as for the firm's business successes.

**Giuseppe Iannaccone.** *Head of the warehouse for finished products at the Mapei plant in Robbiano di Mediglia.*



The first time I met Mr Squinzi was way back in 1983, just a few days after I was hired by his father Rodolfo. When I told him that the interview ended with his father saying in the Milanese dialect 'ches chi l'è un brav fiò' (this one is a good lad), he started laughing and immediately began helping me take my first steps in the company. I soon realised I was part of a huge enterprise that was run like a family business. The company had just been fitted out with its first Computer Centre and at the end of the week I created histograms on graph paper. Mr Squinzi always turned up to check on the sales figures. The thing that struck me most was his incredible capacity to assimilate and memorize an unbelievable amount of information in a very short space of time. He could remember details about building operations and practices from decades earlier even more accurately than I could, and I had followed them in person. Mr Squinzi always showed a great interest in his fellow workers and was never short of a smile or a pat on the shoulders. I even got my ears pulled a few times, but these warnings were always instructive and given in a firm,



clear voice. It only took a few words from him to motivate us with his favorite saying: "never stop pedalling". A few decades ago, during the Cersaie exhibition, I was told I would be sharing a room with him. I had not been at the company for very long and I was a bit apprehensive. Mr Squinzi immediately made me feel at ease and we ended up chatting and exchanging views on the book he was reading. These are just a few stories that are close to my heart, and I will always be endlessly grateful to him for these and many others like them.

**Paolo Giglio.** *Technical Services, Mapei SpA*



My career working for Mapei began after a job interview with Mr Squinzi way back in 1987. At the time he was the President of a European Standards Committee for adhesives for ceramics and we travelled frequently to meet leading manufacturers in the industry: the esteem and respect with which he was greeted at every meeting with his leading competitors always amazed me.

His humanity and ability to convey enthusiasm and love for this company have certainly made Mapei one big family from which it is hard to be separated.

Thank you, Mr Squinzi!"

**Manuela Orlando.** *Corporate Marketing Activities and International Fairs Manager, Mapei SpA*

## THE "BIG BOSS"

*You see, dear Giorgio, the fact is that you didn't know how to be "the big boss".*

*For us, for all of us, you were just "il Dottore (the Doctor)".*

*Because a boss never has time to come over and ask you "how's it going?".*

*The boss is never interested in your opinion about your work; the boss just gives out orders, period!*

*But you, on the other hand, were always asking questions with the utmost humility.*

*So, let me tell you, you were not "cut out" to be the boss; just accept it, you did not have what it takes.*

*At best you could have been the team captain; like in a sports team, all sweat and determination.*

*At most you could have been and..... and for us you were, some sort of father, but never a boss!*

*And..... when, up there on the top floor, they ask you*

*"Who were you when you were down there?"*

*I'm certain you will simply reply..*

*"I was just.. one of them".*

**Pierluigi Scarpellini.** *Procurement Specialist at Mapei plant in Robbiano di Mediglia*

# HE ALWAYS KNEW HOW TO THINK BIG

Giorgio Squinzi's passing is a terrible loss for Italy and Milan. We are all familiar with his life, career and successes and there would be no need to mention them again, if it were not for the more urgent need than ever for positive examples and virtuous models to remind us who we are and what we can achieve if we have confidence in ourselves and our country.

Giorgio Squinzi was, first and foremost, a hard worker; a man who really devoted himself to creating wealth and employment as few others have over the last few decades, combining in exemplary fashion a vocation for business and a passionate interest in research and innovation. Mapei has always manufactured cutting-edge products that have been used on so many projects and iconic buildings all over the planet. Mapei, which employs thousands of staff and has dozens of manufacturing plants worldwide, is the most obvious proof of his entrepreneurial vision and enterprise. A vision further reinforced by his awareness of the social responsibility accompanying business and the need for open, constructive and pragmatic dialogue with the working world; as President of the Confederation of the Italian Manufacturing and Service Companies



by Giuseppe Sala

and CEO of his company, his relations with the unions were exemplary from this viewpoint and set a benchmark we should all try and emulate. An aspect of Giorgio Squinzi's personality that really struck me was the way he followed his own individual passions with the same enthusiasm he devoted to his work. We all know about his love for sport (from cycling to football), but I would also like to emphasise his love of music. Over recent times I got the chance to attend La Scala Opera House board meetings with him: he always made an important contribution to those meetings, showing the kind of enthusiasm and extraordinary expertise that characterised him right to the very end. The best way to celebrate his life's

work and remarkable endeavours would be to now witness the emergence of a new generation of businesspeople ready to draw on the example he set.

The country needs men and women interested in doing business properly and thinking big; businesspeople with a broad outlook on the society in which they live and the world as a whole. People who are not content with small successes and are driven to keep on growing and improving

all the time, ready to work with other businesses and the rest of the working world and its representatives. Milan admires and appreciates anybody embodying these values. The "Ambrogino d'Oro" prize he was awarded by the Milan City Council in 1996 certainly shows that Giorgio Squinzi was completely in synch with the city; everything his colleagues, staff and ordinary people had to say as they fondly remembered him in Piazza del Duomo on the day of his funeral clearly illustrates that Giorgio Squinzi was one of us, and it is as one of us that we would like to keep on remembering him.

*Mayor of Milan*



by Romano Prodi

# IN ITALIAN PEOPLE'S HEARTS IN SPORT AND BUSINESS

My friendship with Giorgio did not stem from discussions about economics or our shared love of cycling. We actually met through his dear wife Adriana. Fate would have it that I was the examining tutor for Adriana's university degree thesis at the Faculty of Political Science in Bologna. She was a very clever and quick student, as is sometimes the case with young students from the Romagna region. We eventually met up again a few years later when she introduced me to Giorgio: it only took me a few minutes to realise how crucial their relationship was in terms of both their private lives and in the world of business. Sadly, in the solemn surroundings of Milan Cathedral, I realised just how painful their final separation was. They built the great company Mapei together: Giorgio working on its manufacturing facilities and Adriana handling its image, making the company so familiar not just to Italians but all over the world. A very special business enterprise, whose distinctive traits meant locating manufacturing plants close to consumers across every continent. I frequently took advantage of this fact to find out from Giorgio how the markets were moving, learning how difficult it was to distinguish between them and how they were evolving. It also taught me the importance not only of following these developments but

also of anticipating them by equipping even the smallest and most distant plants with the research and marketing tools required to interpret the endless nuances of the market.

This attention to detail allowed him to develop his business into a global leader in an industry which, due to low transport costs, tends to be fragmented among small regional manufacturers. A market in which Mapei continued to grow so successfully that it never had to resort to laying off workers or organising redundancy packages.

The end result is that Italy now has a truly multinational company employing over 10,000 staff and operating in over 80 countries worldwide.

Mapei has entered the hearts of the Italian people not only through its products but also through its love of sport. Sport viewed not just in terms of competition but also of ensuring compliance with the necessary rules of ethics and responsibility. That is how Giorgio explained to me his decision to leave the world of cycling after winning every imaginable type of race. It is the same reason he decided to build a sports centre focused on promoting the true values of sport and, in particular, careful monitoring against doping and everything it entails.

I am mainly talking about cycling

because it was not just a passion we shared, but also an opportunity for us to go on lots of rides together.

His love of sport also involved an extraordinary venture in the world of football, where he led his team, Sassuolo, up into the very top flight of Italian football, once again combining his passion for sport with his industrial operations as a homage to the city hosting Europe's leading ceramic tiles manufacturing centre and the biggest market in Italy for Mapei's adhesives and chemical products.

I think Giorgio (and also Adriana) will be pleased to know that as I remember him, in addition to our discussions about Italian industry or the intricacies of Italian politics, I cannot help thinking about that moment way back in July 2006 when we rejoiced together in the stands of Dortmund Stadium after Italy's unforgettable victory against Germany. I think it is nice to remember friends during those happy moments spent together.

*Past President of the EU Commission  
and Past Prime Minister of Italy.*

## LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

Giorgio Squinzi leaves behind a brightly shining example of humanity for all of us to admire: a person who could see beyond boundaries (Mapei is a successful company operating in over 50 countries), without ever forgetting his own roots, a distinctive trait of which he was rightly proud and which, not surprisingly, led him to be a member of the board of directors of two organisations that are most representative of Milan: Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo and La Scala Opera House.

His love for his homeland translated into a business style: Giorgio was a sensitive man with deep empathy for workers as he clearly demonstrated when he was President of the Italian Federation of Chemical Industry Associations, achieving some quite remarkable results such as the signing of six contracts that revolutionised this industry without the need for even an hour's strike, and also as

the head of the Confederation of Italian Manufacturing and Service Companies. A way of life which saw him - with heroic stoicism - still at work in his company office right up until the final days of his life. This style fitted in harmoniously - an apt expression bearing in mind his love of music - with his role as a husband and father. It is often said that behind every great man there is a great woman and, together with Adriana and their children Veronica and Marco, Giorgio created a wonderful family. I have lots of memories that bind us together: operas, concerts and so much more, our shared love for football and healthy sport, something he promoted tirelessly.

When he “adopted” a spire depicting a Young Saint on Milan Cathedral on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018, Giorgio Squinzi wanted his nearest and dearest by his side during the ceremony held on the Cathedral Terraces so that he could point out the direction in which they should be looking: into the future. That statue and what it signifies are an enduring testimony to a life lived to the full. I am certain that the light Giorgio gave off through his shining example will never go out and will continue to show the way ahead for everybody who follows in his footsteps.

*President of Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano.*



by Fedele Confalonieri

## A GUIDING LIGHT FOR US ALL



by Emma Marcegaglia

I have so many fond memories and so many stories still going around my mind from my long and very close family friendship with Giorgio, Adriana, Veronica and Marco. One of the most unforgettable of all these memories, which I always recollect with great fondness and emotion, dates back to an afternoon back in 2002 at Milan Polytechnic. That was when Giorgio was asked to give a speech to the university's academic board and rector. He gave a “lectio magistralis” as part of the ceremony during which he was awarded an honorary degree in engineering, together with my dad Steno, to cap an extraordinary business career. All that ceremony and commotion were not just a fitting reward for Giorgio,

who was made a “prince of chemistry”, complete with cap and gown. Above all, it was an appropriate way of honouring an extraordinary man who, through his brilliance, hard work, commitment, sobriety and humanity, had managed to make his family business and the company Mapei a unique, universal business success. These were the same principles and values that worked as a guiding light to my family and my father. That is why, whenever I think about Giorgio Squinzi, I also think about Steno Marcegaglia: the startling example they both set as businessmen and their incomparable human qualities.

*President of Eni and Past President of Confindustria.*

# AN EXEMPLARY STORY ABOUT A FAMILY BUSINESS



by Diana Bracco

There is something special about family businesses: a wealth of values that run through different generations like DNA and translate into a love of what is produced, the work that goes into it, the people involved in the company and the communities in which it operates. All this very much applies to Mapei and the Squinzi family. I believe that businessmen can only achieve great results with the backing of a united team that has great faith in the company and its possibilities for growth. Giorgio could always rely on that and it allowed him to achieve some extraordinary goals by concentrating on research and internationalisation based around long-term thinking and an almost “obsessive” focus on growth.

He was a tireless worker from when he took over the company in 1984 from his father Rodolfo. Over the last 30 years Giorgio Squinzi took the company to the top of the world. Together with his wife, Adriana Spazzoli, and his children, Marco and Veronica, he developed the business into one of the biggest global companies in the chemicals and building industries. Everybody who works at Mapei can and must be proud of these astonishing facts. I can remember back in 2017, when the company was celebrating its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Mr Squinzi proudly announced that, in its whole history, Mapei “had never made a loss, never resorted to redundancy packages and never fired anybody to reduce staff”. An extraordinary thing.

But Giorgio Squinzi was not just a great businessman, he was also a steadfast guiding figure for all those associations that wanted him to be their President. I

am thinking in particular (with heartfelt emotion) about his appointment as the head of Confindustria, the Confederation of Italian Manufacturing and Service Companies, which he led from May 2012 to May 2016 with outstanding dedication and commitment. He always worked solely in his colleagues’ interest, sacrificing his time and even his health. He was motivated by an extraordinary sense of duty, just like when he was asked to lead the CEFIC, the European Chemical Industry Council. Always pro-European and a great believer in the United States of Europe, Squinzi’s voice also counted in Brussels and he was so talented that the European Chemical Industry Council wanted him as their President. Prior to that, he was twice elected President of the Italian Federation of the chemical industry, first from 1997 to 2003, when we exchanged its leadership, and then again from June 2005 to June 2011. That was when we really became friends, when we began sharing so many positions and doing so many wonderful things together. We have always been committed to such issues as the central importance of business and the firm belief that politics should focus on manufacturing and research.

For me, Giorgio was more a friend (and I would say almost a brother) than a business colleague. We shared so many passions: from the love of the chemicals industry and our commitment to business associations to a passion for culture and sport and a firm belief in fundamental values.

Something else we had in common was a love of music. Together we

managed to get the great conductor Riccardo Muti to come and perform two unforgettable concerts at La Scala Opera House accompanied by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. It was a wonderful event.

Then there was sport, which made him a popular figure with the general public, first through the Mapei Professional Cycling Team and then later when he took over Sassuolo football club. My husband once said to me: “You just wait and see, Sassuolo will get promoted into the Italian Serie A”. And that is what happened. Everything Squinzi touched turned to gold.

A wonderful father and husband, Giorgio was a loyal, honest and brave man; a quiet but extremely friendly person. Never excessive, never overstated, he was one of those businessmen that made Italy great: a generation motivated by commitment, the idea of a “poor family and a rich company”, and global thinking, local action. I can remember, for example, all those speeches he gave at meetings of the Bracco Group’s Board of Directors he was part of for years. I was always extremely interested in his views and global vision of Europe, China and the United States. He was always very well-prepared, asked poignant questions, and gave invaluable advice.

Giorgio Squinzi’s passing means the Italian and European chemicals industry has lost a leading figure and Milan has lost an exemplary citizen and great patron, somebody all of us should always remember with affectionate gratitude.

*President and CEO of the Bracco Group.*

# A MODEL BUSINESSMAN

by Angelo Tantazzi

I first met Giorgio Squinzi about 20 years ago during the presentation of a publication by Prometeia about the tiles industry. That was a key moment for the Italian ceramics industry: the ceramic tiles manufacturing industry was facing major challenges back then, as part of it still is today, concerning its growth and internationalisation.

Thanks to Giorgio and his clear-thinking, Mapei played an absolutely vital role in that context. Mapei set an example: a real focus on products (partly due to his individual know-how) and an understanding of foreign markets,

which, thanks to his long-term thinking, he treated just like the home market. All this helped make Mapei what it is today, an international colossus.

His sense of responsibility led him to take on a number of official duties, first and foremost his post representing Confindustria, the Confederation of Italian Manufacturing and Service Companies, where he tackled the issues and problems facing medium-sized industry and the Italian manufacturing sector in general. My own personal memory of Giorgio is

his smile, his sincere but affectionate politeness, and our enjoyable meetings, even though they were relatively infrequent. He was always a great worker, and everybody will remember his generosity, professional expertise and vision of what an Italian entrepreneur should be like today and how they should act.

*President of Prometeia SpA, an Italian provider of consulting services, software solutions and economic research on Risk, Wealth & Performance Management.*



# PROUD TO BE ITALIAN, A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD



by Adriana Cerretelli

Simplicity has a greatness all of its own. Particularly in those who manage to hold onto this simplicity even after turning their father's small family business into a worldwide enterprise. Eventually becoming a global businessman, the face and trusted brand of a distinctly Italian kind of excellence. With a family feel. Giorgio Squinzi was always true to himself: an ambitious entrepreneur armed, first and foremost, with a wealth of personal and family values untarnished by all the hard work, risks and surprises encountered navigating the shark-infested waters of big business. He saw these dangers, faced up to them and continued on his way, sure of himself, the quality of his products and the endless promises his investment in research had to offer. When I used to come back from Brussels or Rome, we would meet up

on Saturday mornings at Mapei. We would drink coffee together and chat about Italy, Europe and the world, the general air of decline and, together, try and work out where we were going. We would talk about Italian and European politics and he expressed his concerns over the economy, the nation's future and the future of his children and grandchildren.

"We have to be brave enough to leave all this behind", so I used to tell him, even the last time I saw him. But he always refused to give up: he was a tireless fighter, a great Italian deeply rooted in his origins and yet multinational "on his own", like very few other Italian businessmen.

I will miss you, dear Giorgio, with your Milanese accent, clever insight, concrete business mind, culture and love of music, the example you have set and, above all, your smile, that of an honest man. I am proud to have known you. I hope people will try and imitate you: Italy desperately needs people like you.

*Journalist.*

# THE VALUE OF INNOVATION IN THE NAME OF PROGRESS

Giorgio Squinzi is no longer with us, but his legacy and example have already left their mark. I shall forthwith mention some of the most salient features of this exceptional personage and friend. I will do so by using the conceptual nomenclature which is familiar to me as a scholar. These concepts might appear abstract, but they were not so in Giorgio's work, with which I was keenly in tune.

Rather than going through the many successes of his prodigious entrepreneurial career, I shall focus on four paradigms which Giorgio fleshed out and which have resonated with me over many decades, as each pursued his own field of 'work'. Giorgio implemented impressive projects on these paradigms, which for my part were cultivated along decades of research from the scholarly perspective. The first paradigm addresses the role of scientific research as a main motor for innovation and modern entrepreneurship. Giorgio's convictions were not merely focused on using research as an applied tool for productive innovation. Actually he recognized the need for pure research, which in itself meant progress since its ramifications often went far beyond initial expectations. Therefore, he often discussed issues related to research with Lincean Fellows specialized in pure research and technoscience as well as with structural economists (like myself) who were particularly interested in the workings of the real economies. The second paradigm focuses on the role of innovation as an overall frame-



by Alberto Quadrio Curzio

work in which the entrepreneur brings together a broad array of concepts and skills: technoscientific, organizational, economic and institutional. Often the 'cultures' of academia and business struggle to find common ground. The former can consider the latter "too practical" and approximate, while the latter can consider the former as "too theoretical" and abstract. Giorgio thought "outside the box" and avoided being ensnared in these stereotypical categories; he created his own category, and this made him a truly innovative entrepreneur able to constructively converse with the abovementioned 'cultures'. The third paradigm regards internationalisation. Giorgio knew that it meant more than exporting goods, as it includes production in varied contexts: economic, institutional, cultural, and territorial settings. In his multifaceted model, human and cultural factors played a significant role. Technoscience,

production and the market economy are crucial components as are the individuals living in their social contexts.

The fourth paradigm centers on what I called in my studies "social liberalism". Here, by applying the principle of subsidiarity, associations play a key role and provide an organized form of expression which leads to complementarity of sectoral and overall interests. This holds true also for relations among individual EU

member states and the European Union as a whole, in which Giorgio strongly believed.

Lastly, I wish to recall one of the many public events I participated at with Giorgio. In May 2012, I presented my book of interviews "Oltre la Crisi" at the Catholic University in Milan and invited Romano Prodi, a lifelong friend, and Giorgio Squinzi as the main guest speakers. On that occasion we discussed these four paradigms from the various angles of our fields of 'work' and ascertained once again the complementarity of our approaches. I believe this was appreciated by his wife Adriana (who had been a student of Romano's and mine) who was present that day and to whom my most affectionate thoughts go for the earthly loss of Giorgio.

*Emeritus Professor of Political Economy,  
Catholic University of Milan  
President Emeritus, Lincei National  
Academy*

# THE SMILE OF SOMEBODY WHO KNEW HOW TO LISTEN

by Vittorio Grigolo

Dear, gentle, much-loved Giorgio,  
Your smile was always the first thing to greet us, a gentle soothing smile full of humble but irresistible magnetism. We all fell into your web of love and pure, genuine friendship. I can still feel your "presence" standing in front of me with a glass of wine in one hand and a slice of freshly cut ham you kindly handed me, fresh from your table. Sharing has always been your motto, above all sharing with a smile, the smile

of somebody who does not expect anything back in return. Talking about music, sports or anything else was a pleasure, because you made everybody feel at ease. The great code of a great man... knowing how to listen and appreciate things. You are still here deep inside me, even in my voice, now and forever. Thank you for dedicating so many precious moments of your time to me,

together with Adriana, and for opening up the doors to your beloved family, who will remain in my heart now and forever.

*Italian tenor.*



*A terrible loss for the world of culture, economics and sport, an exceptional person of great honesty and profundity, a wonderful person, a real person.*

*Riccardo Muti, Conductor*

# A GREAT PASSION FOR WORK AND A TRUE FRIENDSHIP

by Alexander Pereira

Dear Giorgio,  
Even before I first came to La Scala Opera House, some Austrian friends of mine told me that there was somebody special in Milan called Giorgio Squinzi. A man with a big heart who loved opera and was full of bursting enthusiasm for the theatre. When I came to La Scala and met you for the very first time, I thought about what they had told me and that serene look on your face, your laugh and the way you carried your "heart in your hand" (as they say in Vienna and also Milan), touched me instantly.

I knew straight away that our friendship would be extremely important for the Opera House. I will never forget you telling me that your father took you to La Scala for the first time on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1954. Maria Callas was singing Cherubini's *Médée* conducted by Leonard Bernstein and that was the start of a passion that lasted your entire lifetime. Personally, I will never forget one evening in 1956 when my mother took me to listen to Maria Callas in Vienna performing Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* conducted by Herbert von Karajan. A production that originally came from La Scala. When we first began thinking about and discussing La Scala Opera House and your experiences in this theatre, I knew you would be the right man for the Board of Directors. The theatre already had plenty of reasons for thanking you, including your generosity in contributing money and materials for the major renovation project on the building undertaken in partnership with Milan City Council based on a project designed by the architect Mario Botta. That was another reason why I was embarrassed to ask for your financial



support in joining the Board, but I knew your contribution to the theatre would go way beyond just money, and having you alongside me was crucial in many decisions I made, as well as an opportunity to get to know you better personally.

So, I got the chance to know you better right at the time when you fell ill, and you showed everybody that your optimism, kindness and love of life were stronger than the fear and pain you must have endured over these last few years. I might even dare to say I became quite friendly with you, and you are certainly one of the very few true friends I have had over the last few years and I consider that to be a great gift: one of those friendships that rarely form except during childhood. Today I promise you that for the rest of my life I will show the same kind of affection and attention to your family that you showed to me.

Thank you for everything.

*CEO and Artistic Director of La Scala Opera House.*

# WHEN “DOING” IS WORTH MORE THAN “SAYING”

Giorgio Squinzi telephoned me to arrange what we have been taught to refer to using the (often inappropriate) word “meeting”. As is often the case with people in the public eye, we already knew each other: I had just left my post as the President of Milan Law Court and had thrown myself “heart and soul” into No’hma Theatre, which my sister, Teresa, had left me; he had finished his term in office at Confindustria, the Confederation of Italian Manufacturing and Service Companies. But being members of the same club does not necessarily mean you know each other. Under his Presidency Italy had gone through the “blood and tears” of Prime Minister Monti’s government and almost defaulted. Squinzi’s courage had managed to recharge the engines of hope by focusing on industry and the manufacturing sector to fend off any risk of

“industrial desertification”, as he referred to it. And he had encouraged the world of politics to inject what he described (using sporting jargon) as “a change of pace”, so as to try and cure our chronically ailing public administration with all its “fetters and constraints”. Back then, as alas is still the case, Squinzi ran up against European budget constraints on financing infrastructures and research, the two great platforms of growth that could get us back on our feet. And nothing has changed.

After his term in office at Confindustria, Squinzi went on to continue his public service as the Chairman of the Board of the Sole 24 Ore Group, and his telephone call was to ask me to join the team: jump on board. Ours was not a very happy experience, having to take on - as we did - a highly complicated state of affairs (accounts in the red and unhappy relations between the newspaper’s management and staff). But that tragic situation (how could we possibly forget that 30<sup>th</sup> September, when Gabriele Del Torchio suddenly fell ill?) was



by Livia Pomodoro

what led to and ultimately cemented the very close friendship between us.

As well as having business written in his DNA, which explains the sheer scope and scale of an industrial giant operating in more than 50 countries worldwide, Giorgio Squinzi certainly did not deny himself other pleasures: starting with sport, where he had a vast array of unrepeatable successes first in cycling and then football, setting off on a wonderful venture with Sassuolo: an impetuous rise from the lower divisions to the top flight. Here again he showed his farsighted thinking by ensuring the club had its own stadium, still a significant exception among Italian football clubs. But it was not just sport: Squinzi also developed a love for the visual arts and bel canto, as the Guggenheim Foundation and La Scala Opera House know only too well.

Actions and emotions bequeathed to our country, actions and emotions that made him such an incredibly generous person. Particularly with me and my theatre. He even contributed to covering

the costs of renovating old Santa Marta Church for the Brera Academy that I now preside over.

I think Giorgio Squinzi will be pleased to know that all this positive energy will now be taken up by his wife Adriana. Starting with her work for Sodalitas, the Foundation she chairs that is focused on issues like growth and social business responsibility. Finally, if we happened to measure - something we do so very rarely, bearing in mind how indulgent we are towards ourselves - the distance separating what we say from what we do, then we would be pleasantly surprised to find that Giorgio Squinzi had played a zero-sum game. Indeed, it would turn out that he had done even more than he said he would. And it is this final consideration that makes his friendship with me and all those people who loved him such a rare privilege, a special kind of ‘meeting’.

*President of the Brera Academy of Fine Arts and President of No’hma Theatre.*



by Mario Botta

# THE BEAUTY OF PLANNING THE OPTIMISTIC APPROACH TO LIFE

In the wake of Giorgio Squinzi's funeral held in the striking setting of Milan Cathedral surrounded by his family and friends, I now often find myself suddenly thinking about Giorgio during breaks in my everyday work, remembering him on one hand as if he were still part of my everyday life and on the other as a distinct echo from the past.

His enduring presence wavering between the present and past sounds rather disturbing.

Does this mean Giorgio is still part of my everyday life or is he somebody I just remember from our work together?

The ambiguity of this situation evokes a constant presence-absence that did not come to end when he left this Earth. His optimism in dealing with the contradictions of life coincides with the enduring

force of his thinking: the beauty of "doing", the beauty of building, the beauty of planning in the firm belief that even individual work can contribute to the common good. This perspective allows us to overcome hurdles and set our sights on our ultimate goals.

I worked with Giorgio on various architectural designs: the project to modernise La Scala Opera House in Milan and the project to build Mapei's laboratories in his manufacturing plant in Robbiano di Mediglia, in the outskirts of Milan.

No bureaucratic or structural hurdles were ever capable getting in the way of completing these enterprises.

For the architect, it showed that architecture in itself does not exist and only becomes such through the work of architecture in question. Thank you

again Giorgio!

After all, leaving aside our business ventures together, Giorgio Squinzi always had a very positive impact on my life from a personal viewpoint. His faith in human endeavour is something that has accompanied me throughout my career. I now realise that a significant part of my very own identity has been lost with his passing.

*Architect*



by Father Giuseppe Bettoni

## A LIFE SERVING THE COMMON GOOD

Lots of us have gathered around you today in your beloved Milan Cathedral to try and be of some small comfort to your much-loved wife Adriana. We hope we can, in some way, console her, your much-loved children Veronica and Marco, their families and your beloved grandchildren, in the hope we can lessen their suffering just a little. When your illness came to a dramatic end it was 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the day when the Church commemorates the Guardian Angels, something which for us worldly-wide adults now seems more like a children's story relegated into those blurred and mysteriously realms of fairy tales and fantasy... And yet I think it might be the key to interpreting your life.

There is an old story that tells us that when God created the world everything was beautiful, and everybody lived in peace. One day the devil, who was enraged with envy, dug deep into the ground with his claws creating ravines and valleys to separate the nations, raising up cliffs and mountains so that people could no longer communicate and get on with each other until everybody suddenly found themselves divided and forced to shout out to each other from opposing mountainsides. Seeing how people were searching for each other and crying out, God sent angels to them, so they could use their wings to form bridges and people could come together again. Our Eternal

Lord is still doing this today: he keeps on sending us angels whose wings act as bridges, as meeting places and as means of friendship, so that people can come back together and love each other. Leaving aside this angelic tale of ethereal religiousness and acknowledging the gift you were, Giorgio, to your family, your beloved city, your country and so many others... we might say you were like an angel, who never hesitated to spread his wings or, in other words, use your great skills and talent for building bridges, filling valleys, creating bonds between people and keeping this world going.

In a country where so many people keep on relentlessly scraping away at the earth to create barriers and walls, your intensely lived life, Giorgio, is telling us that it is still possible to live differently, that it is possible to use one's skills and talents for the benefit of the community and everybody's common good. Today you are surrounded by people you did business with, some involved in research, some in sport, some in the arts and music, some in politics and some in other services... you were surrounded by different realms that you managed to criss-cross and bring together. From La Scala Opera House to Milan Cathedral, from industry to football stadiums and social work. Giorgio, I and so many others can bear witness to the fact that you never ignored those who had it

hardest, those who struggled. Without your help, I could never have done so many of the things we achieved together working for Arché, because you believed in solidarity and charity in the concrete sense of feeling genuinely responsible for other people's fate, in deeds and not just words.

I thank the Lord for giving us somebody our country owes so much to; a man of faith or, rather, a man we could have faith in, because your spirituality was steeped in history, studying life carefully, always searching, always dynamic and on the move, as epitomised by your love of cycling. You always said: never stop pedalling! We might say that the bicycle is a perfect metaphor for your busy life, as Madeleine Delbrêl wrote in her "Spirituality of the bicycle":

*You chose us to be in a strange state of balance.*

*A balance that cannot be attained or held except in motion,*

*except when driving forwards.*

*A bit like a bike that cannot stand up without going around,*

*a bike that leans against a wall until somebody gets on it*

*and rides it swiftly along the street*

*President of Arché Foundation.*

*This letter was first published in the Italian newspaper Repubblica on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October.*



by Father Antonio Mazzi

I do not know how or when my very special and warm relationship with Giorgio came about, it was just one of those things that sometimes happen. His smile and his genuineness won me over immediately and he became a lifelong companion, almost a fellow traveller. "How is it going? How are you? Do you need anything?...". Describing Giorgio as just the boss of Mapei, the President of the Confederation of Italian Manufacturing and Service Companies or any of those other titles he held, would, for me, be like dismissing or ignoring that incredibly rare richness of character you hardly ever come across in that kind of environment.

I am almost tempted to say, "a primary school classmate has passed away". This is the nicest thing I can say about those three or four friends I still have left. Friends I see a couple of times a

# I HOPE SOMEBODY ELSE LIKE GIORGIO COMES INTO THIS WORLD

year to whom I can never say no: "Toni, shall we go and eat some polenta or drink a glass of wine". And so off we go to that little restaurant that still happens to be there, although it has been renovated a bit.

When I was interviewed for television just after the Mass held in Duomo Cathedral in Milan, all I managed to say was: "I just hope another Giorgio is born soon, because our Heavenly Father doesn't make people like that very often, and the world certainly needs them."

Somebody capable of bringing together technology, strategy, cutting-edge business enterprise, sport, honesty, solidarity, friendship and simplicity, is a rare breed indeed.

I fondly remember those get-togethers around Christmas time at Colnago's, our days at the sports arena in Bormio, cycling up Stelvio Pass, and those convivial meals with everybody present, adults and youngsters, that his wife Adriana was so good at organising when there was always a gift for the kids at Exodus.

Unfortunately, alongside those pleasant encounters I will never forget meeting him those times when, suffering from his terrible illness, he would hobble up using his walking aids and, despite everything, stop, smile, say hello and, as usual, ask me "how is that business of yours going...". And what an unforgettable hug he would give me.....! Here is another anecdote: we were such good friends that when I was in-

vited to watch the Sassuolo-Inter Milan match, I couldn't refuse to go because I felt I had to cheer on his team for him. I have remembered just a few wonderful moments, not many, just enough to show who Giorgio was for me. But I also feel bound to mention the pain I felt when, while celebrating Mass from the presbytery of Milan Cathedral, I saw Adriana bent over and overwhelmed with suffering.

And then when she came over for the "kiss of peace" and I tried to stroke her face that was now little more than just two eyes shining more brightly than ever, "buried in tears," she had the strength to whisper "I'm sorry... I just couldn't bring myself to call you". To have lost a friend at a time when humanity is really struggling makes this lost twice as bad and brings home to each and every one of us the need to live in a cleaner, more genuine, more sensitive, more sporting and more "inhabitable" society.

*President of Exodus Foundation.*

# A VISIONARY IN THE WORLD OF CYCLING, WHO SPOKE TO PEOPLE'S HEARTS

by Andrea Tafi

Thank you. I would simply like to express my most sincere thanks for everything Giorgio Squinzi did for me. This heartfelt but rather bland 'thank you' is my way of thanking Giorgio Squinzi for everything he represented for me and for all those people, who, like me, were lucky enough to meet him along their way.

In summer 1993 I was fortunate enough to meet somebody for the first time, who, just a few minutes later, would become my official sponsor and my boss. After entering his office, I soon realised that I was not just in an ordinary company or in the midst of the usual business people, I had entered a family of men and women, every last one of whom felt a real sense of belonging. All it took was a handshake, way before I even signed the contract that would tie me to that great "Mapei era" for my entire career, too brief and short lived to be considered an age, but extremely prolific, so much so that it was considered to be a golden period in cycling. After chatting for about a minute I realised he was an extremely well-informed and passionate man, attentive and respectful, who could talk to people's hearts in a way very few people could. His humaneness, attention and respect, combined with an incomparable sense of responsibility and rigour, immediately won me over. His great qualities were plain to see. I managed to gain his esteem, trust and

friendship and I was fortunate enough to win one of the world's greatest bike races, in my opinion the best of all, a race that Giorgio Squinzi and his wife, Adriana Spazzoli, truly loved: the Paris-Roubaix. An extreme race that has come to be associated with the company and its famous cycling team with its distinctive "cube patterned" jersey; a team that built its now legendary reputation on the cobbles of the "Queen of the classics".

I was lucky enough to win it on a day when Giorgio Squinzi watched the race with my entire family at the Roubaix velodrome. What happiness, what celebrations and how many fond memories now shrouded in sadness. They are what help us to keep on going, to keep on doing better, the way he taught us to. We must never stop pedalling whatever happens. But it is undeniable that there is now a feeling of regret and a strong one, as strong as the love that was with him along that final kilometre and that will be with us for the rest of our days.

So, what does Mr Squinzi leave behind? A bit of everything. It is there for all to us. A great family. A great company. Lots of little enterprises of the highest calibre that have become benchmarks over the years, such as the Mapei Sport Center, which he first envisaged and set about creating with Aldo Sassi, who is also still in all our hearts. It is just a pity that the best cycling team in the world

came to the end of the road in 2002.

But once again it happened Mapei style, in the manner of Mr Squinzi and Ms Spazzoli: without ever stopping pedalling.

They left cycling so they could contribute something more and even better for the world of sport. They left a gaping hole behind, but also a visionary philosophy that has captured the minds of so many entrepreneurs, who are now trying to put this method into practice in the whole of the World Tour.

Do you remember when Mapei launched its youth team in 2000? Many people thought it was a bit too much, almost a provocation, overstepping the mark and going too far, but it was just the kind of vision of the future that only Giorgio Squinzi had.

Mapei was the first example of a global team in a sport - cycling - that was only just becoming a worldwide affair. And all this was thought up, envisaged and first tested out by a man who was always one step ahead of the rest, sensing and encouraging change before it happened. For this reason and many others, all I can say to him now is thank you. I will never forget him and never stop pedalling.

*Former cyclist of the Mapei Professional Cycling Team.*





by Ernesto Colnago

# PARIS-ROUBAIX AND THE CARBON BIKE: A WINNING GAMBLE FOR BOTH OF US

There is something so unfair about my being here to remember you, dear Giorgio, so it is with a heavy heart that I am writing these few lines to tell people a little about a certain friendship: our friendship. A real, deep and sincere friendship with you and all of your wonderful family.

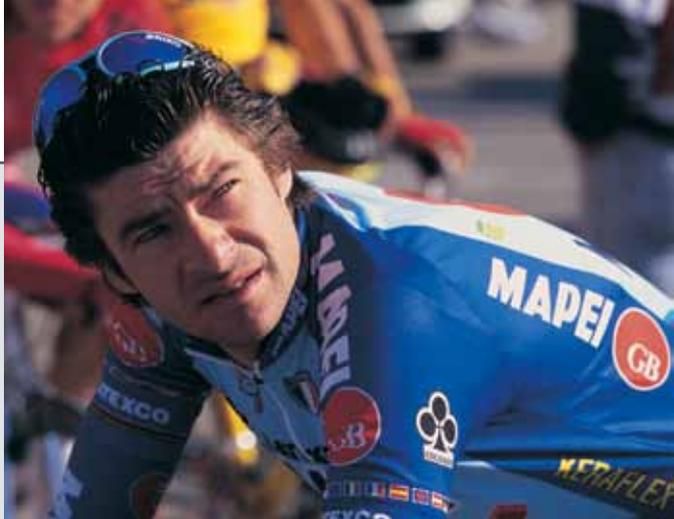
Memories are like precious jewels we carry around in a secret box, and I would like to take this opportunity to take out a couple of them to talk about you and about us, and about our journey together in the world of cycling. The first of these memories dates back to summer 1993. You had only just entered professional cycling a few months earlier after saving the team created by Marco Giovannetti. You had just celebrated the Mapei team's first success after Stefano Della Santa won the Melinda Trophy when I called you to talk about a team called Clas. It was a Spanish team that was about to close down, even though it could boast such top riders as Rominger and Olano: they raced on my bikes and I was always concerned about the fate of teams that chose and choose to ride my bikes. So, I suggested you might be interested in a merger and you did not hesitate, grasping this opportunity to form the

Mapei Clas team, which immediately started winning. Indeed, in 1994 it won an amazing total of 62 races, including the Paris-Nice and Vuelta a España thanks to Tony Rominger and the World Cup thanks to Gianluca Bortolami. I distinctly remember it was the year you and Adriana discovered the charm and severity of the Paris-Roubaix road race, and one of my fondest memories of you is connected with that race. It was 1996, I had just started experimenting with carbon frames and used this particular material to build bikes for the Paris-Roubaix. Plenty of people in the team were not totally convinced by my decision. Other manufacturers had brought out full suspended bikes that year and it was feared that carbon was not ideal for that kind of road surface. In actual fact, people suspected carbon would shatter on the incredibly harsh French cobblestones. "I have studied things carefully and carried out tests - so I reassured you on the phone - and you will find the bikes are competitive". But the night before the race, I remember it was actually 10 p.m., you called me again. "Ernesto, are you quite sure about this? The good reputation of your company and my team are at stake here...". "Definitely, I

have not changed my mind", so I replied. And then you said something typical of Giorgio Squinzi: "Alright then, let's do it. And if we lose, we both lose." Everybody knows what happened after that. We did not lose, on the contrary, we triumphed thanks to Museeuw, Bortolami and Tafi. And that Paris-Roubaix is still a milestone in the history of cycling.

One of the last things I remember has a definite date: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018, the day of my 86<sup>th</sup> birthday. You took the stage at the Unicredit Pavilion in Piazza Gae Aulenti in Milan, along with my new C64 bike and Fabio Aru, the UAE Emirates team's most important new signing, a team that has been racing with my bikes for two seasons. I wanted you up alongside me again so that I could give you one of these customised bikes in the Mapei colours as a special gift. You were emotional, everybody noticed it, and you whispered to me: "Ernesto, you keep the bike, I will come around and pick it up as soon as I am feeling better...". That bike is still here in my museum. It symbolises a great story and a great friendship, as well as a journey I hoped would last much longer.

*President of Colnago Ernesto & C. S.r.l.*



# THOSE WORDS ALWAYS FULL OF WISDOM AND COMMON SENSE

by Gianni Bugno

Hello there Gianni, how's it going? That was how Mr Squinzi used to greet me whenever he phoned me, and he did so regularly. To tell the truth I called him too, but less regularly, because anybody who knows me will tell you I am always shy, reserved and slightly introverted, but that is the way I am and Mr Squinzi, who understood people (including me), knew what I was like, so he would call first. Hello there Gianni, how's it going? And although I was usually a little reluctant to talk about myself, I used to let myself go with him, because Mr Squinzi

always had this power over me and not only me. I felt comfortable, delighted to have the attention of a man I always admired and envied for his greatness and wisdom. For his boundless humanity. That way he had of always making you feel at ease, never making you feel intimidated about who he was and what he represented. After all, Mr Squinzi was a giant. A captain of industry who created a global colossus and held so many important posts without the greatest ease. In a nutshell, he has always been an absolute champion but, at the

same time, he always treated everybody with the utmost gentleness and sobriety, something only great people know how to do. Hello there Gianni, how's it going? It was all fine, Mr Squinzi. It was fine for many years, but what are we going to do now? How will I manage without hearing your voice, your phone calls, your words always full of wisdom and common sense? I will miss you, dear Mr Squinzi. Oh yes, I really will.

*Former cyclist of the Mapei Professional Cycling Team.*

# I PERSUADED HIM TO GET INTO CYCLING



by Ercole Baldini

Giorgio Squinzi is no longer with us and that makes me feel incredibly sad as he was such a classy and highly cultured person. I was lucky enough to meet Mr Squinzi about 40 years ago for business reasons: I was working for the ceramic tile manufacturer Iris Ceramiche and my company was involved in a business venture with Mapei. Giorgio was already a well-established businessman and organised special courses to teach installers how to use his products. Of course, I knew that cycling was his great love and Giorgio had told me that he would like to sponsor a professional team. The chance came around in 1993 when a team lost its financial backing just before the start of the Tour of Italy. I arranged for him to meet the team manager Marco Giovannetti and in just a few hours Giorgio decided to get involved in cycling and take part in the Tour of Italy. People often point out that I was re-

sponsible for getting Mapei into cycling and I consider that a great achievement. Mr Squinzi never expressed any regrets about the decision he made and that makes me feel proud. Back in the 1990s I was also involved in the managerial side of professional cycling and I had contacts with the International Cycling Union (UCI). I often talked about Giorgio's great qualities to the President of the UCI, Hein Verbruggen. In the beginning he and many others thought all the praise I heaped on Giorgio was rather excessive. But then even the UCI realised that Mr Squinzi was an extraordinary person and had created something fabulous as a business man. I am sorry Giorgio has now left us. Now lots of people are remembering Giorgio and the realisation that he had so many friends makes me happy.

*Former cyclist*

# HIS HUG AT THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS STILL BRINGS TEARS TO MY EYES



by Cadel Evans

From our first meeting at the Mapei Professional Cycling Team presentation in 2002, I got to know a man that lead, not from being a leader, not from his authority but from respect. Respect for his ability, his generosity, his fairness, his humbleness. Every member of the cycling team and all the staff at Mapei, were more than a team. In becoming a part of Mapei, I joined a family of colleagues, all motivated and inspired by Mr Squinzi. His inspiration made us a league, all wanting to give our best, together, “vincere insieme”, culminating in the success of Mapei. In our sport of cycling, his contributions will never be completely comprehended. From sponsoring young development teams, national

teams and the ‘super team’ of cycling (‘Mapei’ as it is affectionally known through all of its various iterations), and Mapei Sport Research Center. A sports center that transformed our sport for the better through Mr. Squinzi’s emphasis on research and learning to improve. This, combined with the guidance of our dear Professor Sassi, in a few short years, made cycling move decades ahead. Despite the short sightedness of colleagues, officials and federations, Mr. Squinzi persisted in improving our sport, maintaining the cycling World Championships during a period of cycling’s mismanagement. I, as a disciple of Mapei Sport Center, won one of these World Titles. Memories of

the hug from Giorgio after the finish line brings tears to my eyes. In life we all hope to make a difference, but few of us can ever dream of making a difference to the world as Mr. Squinzi. Giorgio, I thank you, for your contributions to my sport, the opportunities you gave to me, but above all, I thank you for all those you have inspired through sport, though business, through politics, and through being the humble, respectful individual you have been. You were, and always will be, an inspiration for us all. Rest In Peace.

*Former cyclist of the Mapei Professional Cycling Team*



# "AS A TEAM" UP THE STELVIO PASS

by Mario Zangrando

I like to remember him with something he used to say all the time: "If only we Italians could be more like a team, then we would not need to fear anybody". And that is how it was from when we first met: we formed a "team". We rode up Stelvio Pass together, a team of friends sharing the same love of cycling. I would spend 3 (even 4) hours talking with him about bikes, victories,

champions, young talents, football, local and even national politics. It was a great honour to be by your side, dear Giorgio, to help you complete that climb and when you have reached the top of "our" Stelvio Pass each year you were so excited with your face covered in sweat and tears. Now you have got there, Giorgio. I like to think you have joined Aldo (Sassi) and Franco

(Ballerini) along that final kilometer; they are waiting for you ready to pedal together once again towards the Pass.....a Team forever".

*President of the cycling section of Unione Sportiva Bormiese.*

# SUNDAYS RIDING ALONG THE BRIANZA ROADS



For many years Giorgio Squinzi and a group of keen cyclist friends used to meet up at a roundabout in Monza (Northern Italy) to ride along the roads of Brianza together. It turned into a sort of Sunday ritual as they pedalled hard in good company, inevitably ending the ride by enjoying a little tipple together.

# THOSE SATURDAYS CHATTING ABOUT CYCLING

I used to get a phone call around 5:30 PM. "Will you be in Milan tomorrow, Pier Augusto? If you can, come around to my office at the usual time and we will have a coffee together".

He always called me by my name and was always extremely formal and polite. That was just the way Mr Squinzi was, although over the last few years I always referred to him as "President". The Friday phone call was always a godsend for me; it had that same sweet taste, since I knew how great the next day would be: it was really important for me to meet up with him and spend a little bit of time with him in his office in Viale Jenner, where we generally chatted about a bit of everything, but mainly cycling. It was the evening before a wonderful, special day: all for us. A habit we always found time for, even without even mentioning it, that had been going on for years by now.

It did not take much: just a quick phone call and then the next day I was there at around 10 o'clock in the morning to enjoy a tasty coffee with the President, reminiscing, telling stories and anecdotes and gossiping. We talked about so many different things: Nibali, Aru and those young cyclists who were struggling to progress. And then, of course, those Italian World Tour teams that had suddenly vanished off the radar and, needless to say, the Tour of Italy and Tour of France, all subjects that inevitably lead on to all sorts of stories and eventually took us back to the Mapei Professional Cycling Team and an experience that was not just cycling, it was a business, communication and marketing enterprise (the cube-patterned cycling jersey designed by Ms Spazzoli is still there to be admired: an icon) with a very human side to it.



by Pier Augusto Stagi

And then the time would inevitably come around when I had to let him know the date of the "tuttoBICI Oscars", an event he was so fond of and always pencilled into the diary he kept in the left-hand pocket of his jacket. "I will be there...", so he would tell me. Like that day when he asked me: "Will Nibali be there?". "Yes, of course President. He won the Oscar". And then, with a bit of boyish reticence, he said: "Could you put me on his table?...". "But of course, President".

And then we talked about "Le Vele", the non-profit organisation based in Pioltello, near Milan, which meant so much to him and to Ms Adriana Spazzoli. Even the date of the pre-Christmas dinner was a must and was always written down in the diary and never missed. A meal based around the traditional Milanese "casseoula" enjoyed in the company of so many friends, with so much good already done and so much

still to do.

His phone call that fell on a Friday was always an extremely important call for me, since I always felt my friendship with Mr Squinzi – that began way back in 1993 - was a special gift. Something precious. It meant so much to me and I was always so proud to be his friend. I can still remember the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2002 (his birthday), just after he had found out that Stefano Garzelli had failed a drugs test during the Tour of Italy, when he called me to let me know that he would be folding the team at the end of the season and asked me to write a book about those nine years of top-class cycle racing that left their mark on history of cycling and ended up in a box of memories entitled "Cubes of Glory". How I miss those Friday calls: I'm afraid it will never be Sunday again.

*Journalist*



by Francesco Magnanelli

## HUMILITY, HARD WORK AND SACRIFICE TO BUILD A WINNING TEAM

He was a great man, there is no question about that.... he was different from everybody else. I had the good luck and pleasure of knowing him and sharing so many experiences with him. I will never forget what he always used to ask me when we met. "Captain, how is the team?" He had his own way of taking an interest in the team. The first thing he always asked was how we all were..... because for him, we were more than just a company, an ordinary football team, we were almost like children to him, and so he was concerned about his children's well-being. We always had everything we needed, and I think the affection shown by all the people who attended his last farewell at Milan Cathedral is clear proof of who he was and what he meant to so many of us.

So, who was Giorgio Squinzi?? I think lots of people know what kind of person he was, what values he tried to convey and what he managed to create. Personally speaking, I can tell you about the relationship he had with me and the team.

He and his family always tried to let us know how important we were to them;

right from the beginning, they focused on planning, humility, hard work, sacrifice and, above all, achieving certain goals without taking shortcuts.

A farsighted owner, who could see beyond individual matches and tried to build the foundations for something bigger and longer-lasting.

We shared so many moments together, fortunately more good moments than bad ones, but to tell the truth it was when things were hard that he and his family made the difference, helping and supporting us.

Personally speaking, I had a great relationship with him, I held him in the highest esteem for the way he took things on and the determination with which he achieved his results.

I will never forget the phone call we had 20 minutes after being promoted into the Italian Serie A (which also happened to be his birthday), the look in our eyes and hugs after our first wins against Inter Milan (his greatest rivals as an AC Milan fan) and his support when I had to undergo an operation on my knee.

Of course we will miss him, but he has left us so much, he has left us ideas,

guidelines, methods and thoughts about how to play as a team that we need to really focus on... he was unique.

Of course, at the moment we would like to go out and crush everyone, dedicate as many things as possible to him, but that is not the way things are. The fact is that we need to try and get as many points as possible to do as well as we can, because the league championship is tricky and difficult, as he knew only too well. But we came from nowhere to reach the top level, so why cannot we eventually do even better? We cannot say no to our owner, we cannot refuse to at least dream. I will really miss knowing that if I need him he will no longer be there, but at the same time I can draw on everything he taught me over the years, things I guard jealously... Rest in peace.

*Captain of Sassuolo football team.*

# “GIOVANNI, HAVE YOU BOUGHT MESSI FOR ME?”

Dear Mr. Squinzi, there is not enough space in this magazine to express the great void you leave behind. Even though I knew about your illness, this day came suddenly, almost unexpected, and now I find myself here thinking about everything you taught me: your bravery, your determination, your enthusiasm and your strength, but above all, your humility.

Dear Mr Squinzi, I really did not think we would go our separate ways so soon. I took it for granted we would be together for many more years. You are much more than just an employer to me; you are everything: a maestro, an example, sometimes almost like a father. Together with your wife Adriana, you always made me feel welcome and I think of you as part of my family.

Our meetings to talk about your team Sassuolo, our phone calls after matches, the way you always backed my decisions. Countless times you ended up consoling me after defeats. You always found the right words to cheer me up and you were always at my side. Memories are our strongest weapon: nobody can cancel them out, and they give me and your football team, Sassuolo, the strength to keep on going. You and your family have always made sure we have everything we need. You know your players by name and always have a thought and a kind word for everybody, from the players who have been at the club longest to the new boys.

With your support, we followed the policy of taking small steps to keep on improving our results, achieving our goals through hard work and never taking the easy option. And that is how we made a dream come true, the creation of the football centre, because you always wanted your lads to have



by Giovanni Carnevali

the best.

Thank you.

You have helped me remember what really counts through your open, respectful attitude and genuineness. Respect for people, respect for the rules, respect for teammates.

Commitment, sacrifice, hard work, a love of life and sharing in the good times and bad times we shared together.

I will keep on working with great enthusiasm and humility just the way you always taught me, but I will miss you so much.

I can already feel your absence, your consoling words, the hugs when I came into your office, it always made me feel part of your family.

My thoughts go to your wife, Adriana, you were inseparable, I can remember all the time you said to me “I need to hear what my wife thinks”. The two of you welcomed us, now you have left me in her hands, and she will give me

the strength to keep on going.

I will miss that question always asking me jokingly to hide your true ambition: “Giovanni, have you bought Messi for me?” And I used to say “Mr Squinzi, we’re working on it!”.

Maybe one day I will manage to buy him and dedicate him to you and you alone.

Mr Squinzi, you will always be in my heart, part of you will always be with me, and I will carry on with our project for your sake.

I have written to you in the present tense, because I know you are, and always will be, by my side.

A big hug from me, Mr Squinzi.

*Sassuolo's Managing and General Director.*

## AN EXTRAORDINARY PERSON

I will never forget what an extraordinary person he was, somebody who always stood out for his humility and simplicity, the true qualities of a great man. Thinking about what an important businessman he was and yet the way he behaved, acted and related to other people really gives you an idea of what kind of person he was. One of his qualities I most admired was the way he made the person or people he was talking to feel so at ease. I had so much more than just a working relationship with him. I will never forget when I met him once on a flight to the United States. I was with my daughter Valentina and he was with his wife Adriana. We travelled together and then enjoyed a wonderful evening in New York. After that,

whenever we met, they always asked me about my daughter, something I really appreciated and made me very fond of them both. During the year I was at Sassuolo when we won the league championship and got promoted into the Italian Serie B, we did not see Mr Squinzi that often. It was his first few years at the club and he had so many business commitments, but you could always feel his presence and we managed to build a good relationship that was

fantastic for me. We were never out of touch after that. We talked about football, sport and other matters; for me it was a privilege to have enjoyed this kind of relationship with such an exceptional person as him.

*Football team manager.*



by Massimiliano Allegri

## A RELATIONSHIP FAR BEYOND FOOTBALL



by Francesco Acerbi

chosen words he always managed to get to the point. Our relationship went far beyond football, perhaps because

I remember Mr Squinzi as a great man. He was not very talkative and had very little to say even in the changing rooms. But you could not help liking him, he was an extremely humble but remarkable person. I have not met many people like him in my entire life. Despite having created an empire like Mapei, he has always remained down-to-earth. He never raised his voice when he spoke to you and with just a few carefully

of the illness we both suffered from. When I decided to ask for a transfer to Lazio, he wanted me to stay at first, but then he understood my ambition as a footballer and gave me his okay. Of course, if he had said no I would have stayed for his sake, out of a sense of gratitude and affection towards him. When I was ill, I drew incredible strength from the simple messages he sent me. I realised I was important to him. Everybody will miss him at Sassuolo, both as a businessman and a person who everybody liked and respected. I will never forget the times we embraced, sometimes after a big win or just at an emotional or difficult time. Gestures like that made words superfluous.

*Former Sassuolo footballer.*



Players and fans remembering Giorgio Squinzi at the Sassuolo-Inter Milan match on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

