

Mario Zucchelli



This issue of *Terra Antartica* is dedicated to the memory of Mario Zucchelli (1944-2003), man of many talents - engineer, manager, strategist, planner - the leader of the Italian Antarctic Programme. Mario died unexpectedly in Bologna on 24 October 2003, a week after he was awarded the gold medal for schools, culture and art by the President of the Italian Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

Mario obtained a degree in Nuclear Engineering at the Università of Bologna and was employed for many years at the Italian nuclear energy agency (ENEA). In 1987, he was appointed head of the *Progetto Antartide* of ENEA and was, therefore, responsible for the implementation of the Italian Antarctic Programme.

Mario was a dynamic, enthusiastic and tireless manager of the Italian Antarctic Programme to which he dedicated more than 17 years of hard work being the centrepiece for the construction and development of the scientific station at Terra Nova Bay (which has now been nominated Zucchelli at Terra Nova Bay) and the Italian scientific expeditions to Antarctica.

He was a founding executive member and former chairman of the European Polar Board. From 1991 to 1994 he was COMNAP chair. In the early nineties, he was one of the promoters of the French-Italian agreement for developing scientific research at Dome C, on the polar plateau, including the construction of the permanent station Concordia. Concordia as a European platform was one of Mario's dreams. Mario largely contributed to the great success of the European Programme for Ice Coring in Antarctica (EPICA) at Dome C. In the same years, he was an active member of the operation manager group of the Cape Roberts Project and of the subsequent ANDRILL Project.

A great loss not only for the Italian Antarctic Programme, but for the whole Antarctic community!