



## Nicola Dallaporta



Trieste, Italy, 28 Oct. 1910 - 23 Oct. 2003

**Title** Professor of Astronomy, University of Padua, Italy  
(Honorary Academician)

**Field** Astronomy

**Nomination** 5 Oct. 1989

**Commemoration** – Nicola Dallaporta died in October 2003. He had been a respected and active member of our Academy since 1989. A graduate of Bologna University, he taught at the Universities of Catania, Turin and Padua, where he was nominated full professor in 1947. Dallaporta was one of the leaders of the reconstruction, in the post-war years, of the Italian school of Theoretical Physics. His early work was of very high quality, and touched on the composition of cosmic rays, on the nature of strange particles and their weak interactions, on the properties of hypernuclei, which are new types of atomic nuclei where one of the protons or neutrons is substituted with a strange particle, such as a ‘Lambda’ hyperon, and on the symmetry properties of elementary particles. His work had wide resonance, and has left its mark in the development of elementary particles. We find it cited in history books, for example in *Inward Bound* by Abraham Pais. In the sixties Dallaporta gave a crucial contribution to the development of Italian Physics, with the foundation of the first group of Theoretical Astrophysics in Padua. Italian astronomy was then a very secluded discipline, centered in a handful of observatories, often endowed with antiquated instrumentation. In opening up the new field of astrophysics, Dallaporta brought to astronomy the team work style and international flavour well established in the high energy physics community, and this soon bore fruit within a number of universities. His astrophysics work, which he pursued into his later years, was also of consistently high quality and widely appreciated. It ranged from stellar evolution to cosmology and the dynamical evolution of galaxies. Dallaporta was not only a great scientist, but a person of great kindness and humanity. The writer Primo Levi, author of *If This Is A Man*, fondly remembered his close friendship with Dallaporta, how he helped him in his studies in Turin, and after the war tried to help him again in his attempts to recover from the horror of the nazi concentration camps. Dallaporta was also a man of profound religious convictions, who attained an admirable harmony between religion and science. In the very last years of his life Dallaporta took an active part in the discussion of the anthropic principle, to which he contributed his original viewpoint. I will not mention the many honours Dallaporta received, which you can find listed in our Yearbook, but only express my deep sense of loss for his departure.

Nicola Cabibbo

### Main prizes, awards and academies

Premio Presidente della Repubblica, 1967; Medaglia Presidente della Repubblica per Benemeriti della Cultura, 1998. Membro effettivo: Accademia dei Lincei; Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere Arti; Accademia Galileiana Patavina di Scienze Lettere Arti. Socio corrispondente: Accademia Scienze Torino; Accademia Lombarda; Accademia Rovigo

### Summary of scientific research

Particelle elementari; Componenti dei raggi cosmici; Identificazione delle particelle strane; Universalità dell'interazione di Fermi; Simmetrie delle interazioni forti; Forze pioniche negli iperframmenti; Evoluzione stellare; Struttura delle galassie.

### Main publications

Dalla Porta N., *Istituzione testi di fisica teorica*, ed. Patron, Bologna 1970; Dalla Porta N., *Uno sguardo all'attuale cosmologia*, ed. Borla, Roma 1976; Dalla Porta N., *Cristianesimo e mondi tradizionali*, ed. Piovan, Abano 1991; Dalla Porta N., *Scienza, Metascienza e Metafisica*, ed. CEDAM, Padova 1990; Dalla Porta N., *Scienza e Metafisica*, ed. CEDAM, Padova 1997.