

To my uncle Ezio

SARA ALBANESE

It is with great pleasure that I dedicate these words full of personal and professional appreciation and affection to my dear Uncle, Dr. Ezio Bortolussi.

I remember with joy your stories of your youth, spent in Arzene, when you told me that as a young boy you loved playing football, but there were no balls and you had to make them using old, discarded socks.

You left Friuli when you were young; you wanted to study and you did so in Geneva, in another country, with another language and different customs.

From Switzerland you then left for America and crossed into Canada, taking on yet another language and further studies. Adapting to a new change certainly wasn't easy, but with the perseverance typical of Friulians, not only did you find your way, but you succeeded at constructing buildings and skyscrapers all over North America. Starting from the basics, you learnt to do the work that has led you, today, to become one of the Friulians who have achieved significant things abroad, bringing prestige to our land.

Among these, we often remember Luigi Del Bianco ("the stonemason from Meduno"), who gave shape to President Lincoln's face on Mount Rushmore. Often when I think of you, I think that you are no less: he left the mark of his work on the mountains of the United States; you helped design the Vancouver skyline, whose tallest skyscraper, the 200-metre Shangri-La, bears your signature.

In your many years of work, you have built over 400 skyscrapers and buildings in numerous places, especially in Canada and America. But you have not forgotten Friuli, and here, too, you wanted to leave a mark of your work, which is an honour for us.

For me you are and always will be a point of reference and a source of professional and human inspiration. Like you, in order to work, I had to move abroad after graduating, learn another language and adapt to other customs and traditions. And thanks to you and your stories of the hardships and joys of your great work, I embarked on the path of architecture and construction. From you I learnt to study and work hard and not to let adversity get me down. That is why I feel close to you and all the sacrifices you have had to make, giving up the closeness of your family and a life in your homeland.

Despite the physical distance, you have always been close to me with your thoughts and encouragement. Telling you about my university achievements and return games over the phone was helpful and reminded me why I was doing – and still do – all of this. The passion for architecture and the satisfaction with a completed and well-executed construction make me feel a little closer to you. I always talk proudly about you to my colleagues and everyone is surprised and impressed by your work.

A sincere and strong hug, Uncle Ezio. For me, you are and always will be a beacon to follow.

Sara Albanese
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