

Bologna May-June 2016

I must say that I have never before being as proud of having been a professor of Italian at Indiana University as I am today. The ceremony of yesterday and the splendid events that are now taking place in the beautiful courtyard and the terrazza of this magnificent villa which offer a splendid panoramic view of the city of Bologna is something that we will never forget. And for this we must express our most heartfelt thanks to the enthusiastic and steady support on behalf of foreign studies by I.U. President Michael McRobbie, as well as the tireless and impeccable organizational efforts of Doctor Kathleen Sideli, Managing Director, BCSP, Bologna Resident Director Professor Andrea Ricci and the local planning committee.

I love Bologna, a city where as a child I attended for two years a local elementary school and where I was fortunate enough to eventually spend the academic years 1973-74 and 1978-79 as Resident Director of the Indiana-Wisconsin Junior Year of Study Abroad.

To see and hug again Nicoletta Bonafe', the Center's irreplaceable administrative secretary as well as several former participants, brought back to my mind a flood of memories of times spent together visiting the Museo della Ceramica of Faenza, the Thanksgiving Dinner in a local trattoria of Imola eating small chickens cooked on a fireplace, meeting both in Bologna and then in his own home in Ferrara the world-known Italian novelist Giorgio Bassani and having the pleasure of hearing for the first time Janis Russell sing at a party in my Bologna apartment. I then told her that she should pursue a career as a singer, as she has so successfully done through the years, entertaining us all today with her splendid and powerful voice. Students who were then in their early twenties are now accomplished professionals such as Paula Marsili, from Chicago, a Wisconsin student who after earning an MA in Italian at I.U. and a brief experience as a bilingual teacher in Louisiana is now a prize-winning photographer in Florida; Tony Lupica, a New York native and an I.U. MA in Italian, who since graduation has been teaching Italian in his home state; David Stockdale, also from New York, who having fallen in love in

Italy, has been since then living in Piacenza where he teaches English and writes music. Among the students who were not able to come to Bologna , I remember Elizabeth Burnam , whom we called Bettina, the youngest of the twenty 1973-74 participants, who surprised us all facing Bologna downtown traffic to come to the Center riding a Vespa bigger than herself! At the Bologna Celebration I have seen again several other former I.U.students who studied with me in Bloomington and are now living in Italy such as Mimma Silvestri, Antonella Kim Johnson, Susan Kazmierczak and Manuela Gieri,the holder of a Ph.D in Italian from I.U who now teaches in an Italian University. Among the former Resident Directors there is also Dino Cervigni, who earned his Ph.D. in Italian at I.U. and whose dissertation I was privileged to direct. Dino is now an Emeritus Professor of Italian at the University of North Carolina and a very distinguished scholar. When some of your former students and friends have reached retirement age, you then realized how old you are!

In spite of life's ups and downs, I would not have wanted to be anything else but a teacher!