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Distinguished Bologna Chemist receives lifetime achievement award at palace

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Contact: Alex Jackson
Corporate Public Relations, Nature Publishing Group
T: +44 (0)20 7843 4850
Alex.Jackson@nature.com

AN Italian scientist known worldwide for his work as an inorganic photochemist has been recognised for inspiring a generation of young scientists, receiving the 2013 *Nature* Award for Mentoring in Science.

Vincenzo Balzani (University of Bologna) was presented today with the lifetime achievement award and €5,000 prize at the Quirinal Palace by the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano; Editor-in-Chief of *Nature* Philip Campbell; and chair of the judges Luciano Maiani. He was awarded the prize jointly with physicist Giorgio Parisi, who also received €5,000. Biologist Michela Matteoli received the mid-career award and the €10,000 prize.

Balzani has been described by many as a pioneer working in photochemistry and photo physics, and is one of the world's most cited chemists. He graduated from the University of Bologna in 1960 and went on to teach Chemistry there for more than 30 years between 1973 and 2011.

He inspired many generations of notable young scientists before becoming an Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at the University of Bologna in 2011. Dr Nicola Armaroli, a research director at the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR) and previous student of his, described him as "the most original, productive and illustrious Italian chemist, who was born to teach science."

Professor Leif Hammerström, Chair Professor of Chemical Physics at Uppsala University, Sweden credits Vincenzo's conceptual thinking and creativity as the main influence behind the highly reputable school of inorganic photochemistry in Italy.

Hammerström said: "Vincenzo is a true pioneer and key contributor to important, fundamental photophysical and photochemical advancements. He lets young researchers shine forth and his creativity has been an exceptionally influential source of inspiration throughout the world of science.

"Few researchers can be considered to be among the founders of a major scientific field, but he is definitely one of them."

Former student, Luisa De Cola, Professor at the University of Strasbourg, ISIS, added: "His intuition and creativity were contagious and he taught us all to think outside the box and to use our imagination as much as possible."

Launched in 2005, the annual *Nature* Awards for Mentoring in Science recognize outstanding scientific mentorship and focus on a specific country or countries each year, and 2013 focused on Italy. *Nature* is the leading weekly, international scientific journal.

Editor-in-Chief of *Nature*, Philip Campbell, said: "In an era when laboratories are under great pressure to be competitive, it is essential that they maintain the technical robustness and ethical integrity of their science, while also empowering creativity. Thus the mentoring of young researchers has never been more important. And good mentoring by laboratory heads is not a skill that can be taken for granted. That's why I am so delighted this year to celebrate outstanding mentoring within an illustrious scientific culture: that of Italy."

More information about the *Nature* Awards for Mentoring in Science is available at www.nature.com/nature/awards/mentorship/.

Photos of the award ceremony will be available from 25 November
All requests to Alex Jackson (Alex.Jackson@nature.com)

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