MARINA FRESCURA

(Savona, 4 January 1945 – Toronto, 27 May 2010)
Dott. in Lettere, M.A., Ph.D.

In Memoriam: MARINA FRESCURA

Our readers will be saddened to learn of the death last spring of Marinella Anna (Marina) Sassu Frescura, a longstanding member of the Canadian Society for Italian Studies (CSIS) and one of our valued colleagues.¹ Associate Professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics at York University, she graduated in “Lettere” from the University of Genoa in 1968 and taught in Padua and also at the University of Venice before coming to Canada in 1972. Marina completed her M.A. in Italian Studies at the University of Toronto in 1977 and later obtained her Ph.D. in sociolinguistics from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto with a dissertation titled *A Sociolinguistic Comparison of “Reactions to Complaints”: Italian L₁ vs English L₁, Italian L₂ and Italian as a Community Language*. Engaged at first in part-time teaching at the University of Toronto and some city institutions, in 1976 she became a full-time faculty member at York University in Toronto, where she taught courses in Italian and eventually also general linguistics, more specifically socio-pragmatics and discourse analysis at the graduate level.

Working at first on speech patterns of refusal, apology and politeness, the language of transgression, and other aspects of linguistic performance—in Italian Canadian contexts among others—, she also carried out research on discourse used in hospital settings, in the areas of telemarketing, telephone calling, and television announcing, and was engaged as well in the study of methods and materials for the teaching of Italian. Over the course of her career she regularly presented the results of her research in the fields of sociolinguistics, linguistics, and Italian language teaching at the annual scholarly conferences organized by the Canadian Society for Italian Studies (CSIS), the American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI), and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and also at international conferences in Cuba, Hawaii, Mexico, and Denmark and symposia held at various locations in France and Italy.

A lively teacher and conference presenter, and frank colleague who did not mince words, Marina was an active member of the profession. She served in various capacities with several associations, most notably as asso-

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ciate editor of the American Association of Teachers of Italian Bulletin (1993-97), as member of the editorial board of *Quaderni d'italianistica* (2003-07), as member and chair of the nominating committee of the Canadian Society for Italian Studies (1997-98, 2006-09, respectively), and as member of the executive committee of the Association pour le Rayonnement des Langues Européennes (ARLE) (1996-99). Often called upon to referee submissions to the *Canadian Modern Language Review*, Soleil Publishing, and the University of Toronto Press, she also evaluated standard research grant applications for the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Earlier in her career she had served as a member of the executive committee of the American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI) (1988-94) and as a member of the executive committee of the Canadian Society for Italian Linguistics and Language Teaching (CSILLT) (1984-85).

Professor Frescura was the recipient of many research and travel grants from her university and from the Mariano Elia Chair in Italian Canadian Studies at York University and also received major funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC); a further grant from the Établissement Français des Greffes enabled her to give a paper at a symposium on organ transplantation and donation held in Paris. Marina had always had an interest in medicine and, over many years, carried out research in the field of sociolinguistics as applied to the medical field. In 1999-2000 she was involved in a study on organ donation in the Italian community of Toronto that was sponsored by Organ Donation Ontario.

Sole author of *Interferenze lessicali: inglese-italiano* (University of Toronto Press, 1984), she collaborated with Raffaella Maiguascha in particular, along with other York University colleagues, on the practical workbooks *Schede di Lavoro 1* (University of Toronto Press, 1985; 2nd ed. 1995) and *Schede di Lavoro 2* (University of Toronto Press, 1988. 2nd ed. 2001). In more recent years, together with two Italian colleagues, she produced *Le preposizioni in contesto* (Perugia: Guerra Edizioni, 2008) and also paid tribute to her personal heritage by editing a volume of her father's poetry in Ligurian dialect (2004).

Her many articles and book reviews were published in a wide range of North American and European scholarly journals including *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Pragmatics and Language-Learning*, *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *Quaderni d'italianistica*, *Canadian Journal of Italian Studies*, *Italica*, *Europe plurilingue*, *Rassegna italiana di linguistica applicata*, *Il Veltro*, and *Rivista di teologia morale*. Some also appeared in conference proceedings.

Her last paper, written in collaboration with two researchers in the health sciences, was published in *Patient Education and Counselling* in 2010.

During her life, which she lived to the fullest, Marina always demonstrated great energy. The mother of four children (Alessandro, Paolo, Anna-Maria and Luisa), and wife of Gianni Frescura, a physicist who was posted at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris from 1993 until his sudden death in 2003, she amazed all those who knew her for her ability to balance so well the needs of career and family. An avid traveler and gifted creator of much craftwork (including ceramics and bookbinding), she was known for her wide-ranging interests and talents, not only as a teacher and researcher on language, but also as a lively and witty raconteur.

After she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in December 2006 Marina delved into the intricacies of chemotherapy and actively sought the most avant-garde medical treatments, as she combated the disease for a full three and one-half years. She will be fondly remembered and genuinely missed by many colleagues and students.

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