Remarks by Efi Foufoula-Georgiou at the memorial service of George Bugliarello

It is a great honor and a deeply moving experience for me to be here today and pay tribute to a great friend, a mentor, a scholar, a visionary who believed in change, and above all a great human being. I first met George in 2000 when I was Director of the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory at the University of Minnesota, the Laboratory where George first arrived from Italy and where he obtained his Master’s degree. Somehow my insight and admiration for his background and accomplishments as an alumni of our Laboratory led me to invite him to Minneapolis and this marked the beginning of a fond relationship and of a dedicated service of George to his alma matter. I still remember the first time we met. I picked him up at the lobby of his hotel and it took a split second for an Italian like George and a Greek like me to decide that we did not want to have breakfast at the hotel but rather find a small coffee shop for a double espresso! This was George, always young in spirit with a spark and enthusiasm in his eyes.

Occasions such as today, are times of reflection, times to honor a life gone by committing ourselves to make more with our own lives. So as a tribute to George, I want to pose two challenges to all of us here today. One challenge is to the young people in the audience, and the other to the older people like me.

For the young, I challenge them to come and examine this book that I carry with me today. It is dated 1954 and is the Master’s thesis of George which I retrieved from the archives of the Lab. It is on “The resistance to accelerated motion of spheres in water” -- it is meticulously done with handwritten mathematical symbols, carefully drawn charts and original ideas. I want you to ask yourselves: why would a 24 year old Italian boy leave beautiful Trieste and Padova to come to cold Minnesota to study the motion of fluid around spherical objects? The answer is passion and love for the pursuit of knowledge. Passion to understand. So young people, find your passion, no matter how small it is, and commit yourselves to it. It is the beginning of larger heights to yet be reached.

To the older people in the audience, the people that have the ability to influence younger minds, the people that do the hirings, the people that set directions, I challenge you to never lose site of the fundamentals, and never forget the human factor. What glitters is not always gold, and what does not glitter has the potential to become. Some dreams take a long time to bear fruit, like 14 years for Metrotech to become a reality. It is the journey of getting there that is as important as the goal.

We are gathered here today to honor the 83 years journey of George, a journey that he lived with principles, ethics, love for the pursuit of knowledge, kindness and above all belief in the human spirit. It was a journey of a single man who touched the lives of thousands. Let all of us here today reflect on our own journeys and make them more meaningful.