Short Communication

A tribute to Giovanni Anania: Scholar, Mentor, Friend

Tribute with respect to his work on trade policies and agreements

Mary Bohman (ERS-USDA, US), Colin Carter and Alex McCalla (University of California, Davis, US)
Tribute with respect to his work on trade policies and agreements

MARY BOHMAN (ERS-USDA, US), COLIN CARTER and ALEX McCALLA (UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS, US)

We write these words to help us celebrate the life of Giovanni Anania both as a talented and internationally recognized applied agricultural economist, but more importantly as a warm, caring, ever positive human being. We were blessed with the opportunity to work with him as a scholar, enjoy him as a conscientious, understanding and collaborative colleague, and as a loving friend whom we loved in return. Indeed, he was a true and loyal friend and a loving husband to his wife Margherita. We shall all miss him but are much better off for having known him. We focus on two facets of Giovanni: the man—the wonderful human being and the scholar—whose work will be his lasting legacy.

Giovanni The Man

We all first encountered Giovanni at Davis as a fellow student, as a co-author and as his major professor. We all watched as he did extremely well in our program and was always intellectually curious and challenging to be around. Once you met Giovanni you were hooked for life. You wanted to be his friend and he reciprocated in kind. Giovanni was the heart and soul of his Davis graduate student cohort. He and Margherita hosted large, Italian style dinners at their graduate student apartment with tables, chairs and dishes they borrowed from their close friends Ila and Mondi Temu to seat everyone.

Giovanni’s leadership among students portended his future leadership roles that we all have benefited from. He was always fair, seeking to see all sides of the issue, careful in his judgements and sensitive to those on the other side. He didn’t have a discriminatory bone in his body.

After he left Davis all of us counted him as a valued colleague and forever friend. Giovanni was constantly engaged internationally with the International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium (IATRC), a member since 1986 when he attended as a graduate student. He was a regular and active participant, with the AAEA, IAAE and the European Association of which he was the current President.

All three of us marveled at his organizational prowess as we worked as a team to put on two WTO Conferences in Calabria and Capri, both cosponsored by the IATRC. We were all thrilled when Giovanni went out of his way to attend our 50th Anniversary Celebration of the UC Davis PhD program this past March. He came, he said because he was a life time fan of the UC Davis program. As usual he broke up the house as he helped recall some of the non-academic happenings of his decade. For all of us it was our last chance to enjoy being Giovanni’s friend. We are proud that he was such a distinguished ambassador for the UC Davis program.

Alex McCalla had the special pleasure interacting with Giovanni closely over an extended period as he worked through a complex theoretical and modelling topic in inter-
national trade. In his PhD dissertation acknowledgement he wrote: “Working with Alex McCalla was always stimulating and encouraging. The lessons I learned from him go far beyond the matter of this dissertation. I only hope that I will be able to establish with my students the kind of relationship that I had with him”. That relationship lasted 30 years until July 15th and will always be cherished. We have abundant evidence that he was loved by his students. We shall all miss him, but we will be sustained by remembering the good times.

**Giovanni The Scholar**

Giovanni came to Davis with a firmly established concern for the economics of agriculture and the welfare of rural people in Southern Italy. His early writings were concerned with market imperfections and the impacts of discriminatory policies. At Davis he chose to work on international trade issues because he saw things like targeted exports subsidies, embargoes and trade preferences as real issues in agricultural trade but as he tried to model them he found traditional spatial trade models did not properly deal with the possibility of countries being both importers and exporters of the targeted product. His thesis addressed and provided a modelling approach to deal with the issue. This was the beginning of his life time interest in multilateral, bilateral and unilateral trade policies, analysis of their impacts and critical role in trade negotiations.

In the early 1990s, Giovanni (and Alex McCalla) published a paper showing the importance of alternative assumptions regarding arbitrage behavior when modeling discriminatory trade policies. They found the previous literature was quite restrictive due to the use of simple arbitrage rules. They applied their more realistic model to the US-USSR grain embargo in the late 1970s and concluded that this type of export embargo is unlikely to be effective.

In this same time period, Giovanni examined the domestic and international impacts of the U.S. Export Enhancement Program (EEP) for wheat. EEP used targeted in-kind subsidies to expand U.S. exports and was designed specifically to compete with subsidized exports from the European Community (EC). With his co-authors, Mary Bohman and Colin Carter, Professor Anania found that EEP could not be welfare-improving for the U.S.

It was in this early work that Giovanni demonstrated his tremendous skill for modeling complicated international commodity markets. He had a talent for seeing the core economic drivers instead of getting lost in the obscure details. This was one of the central themes of his research program throughout his career. Just a few years ago he published an insightful paper on calibrating mathematical programming spatial models.

In a 2000 OECD report, Giovanni identified the major agricultural trade policy concerns of OECD non-members. The insights from his research were used to supplement OECD documents that considered how emerging and transition economies were affected by the implementation of the Uruguay Round Agreement. Professor Anania assisted the OECD in understanding the issues at stake for emerging and transition economies in multilateral trade negotiations and the resulting policy implications.

In a paper entitled “Agricultural Export Restrictions and the WTO: What Options do Policy-Makers Have for Promoting Food Security?” Giovanni examined the likely trade, food security and development implications of various options for disciplining agricultural export restrictions. This paper was published in 2013 by the *International Center for*
Trade and Sustainable Development and it was a thorough analysis of the implications of various options for disciplining agricultural export restrictions.

Giovanni was the leading economics expert on the world market for bananas. He conducted a number of influential studies on regional trade deals between the EU (the largest importer of bananas) and banana exporters and the resulting impacts on trade in bananas and the overall competitiveness of the industry.

Continuing his scholarship in complex linkages between international and domestic markets, last year, with Margherita Scoppola, Giovanni published a timely paper on the importance of assumptions made about market structure and firm behavior in empirical trade policy analysis. Recognizing that market structure matters in agricultural trade, they incorporate imperfectly competitive markets in a spatial modeling framework. Their paper will serve as a roadmap for other trade researchers trying to include realism in their models.

We hope by now we have documented what an amazing guy Giovanni was. He was a first class applied economist with a clear sense of what the real issues were and a great loving friend who you really wanted to hug. We shall miss him. To Margherita and his family our thoughts are with you. May you be comforted, as we will be, by remembering how fortunate we all were to have been able to share him for a while. Peace.