In personal and professional terms, Emilia Martignoni, who died recently, lived a rich life – a life that touched the lives of the many people who knew her as a friend, colleague, or doctor.

The website of Parkinson Italia immediately posted a notice on its homepage, where it remained for many days, recalling all the hard work that Emilia, who always related to patients on a personal level, did with the people who came to her for her help. Indeed, she approached her patients on many levels – professional and technical but also emotional: empathy was very much part of her approach and she always considered the patient's opinion of the utmost importance; indeed, her last published scientific work was devoted to Parkinson's disease seen “from the patient's point of view”.

In her professional life, Emilia Martignoni was an important point of reference for the many neurologists who have been involved in the field of movement disorders since the early 1980s, from those with whom she worked as an equal to those who were her pupils.

She did her professional training in Varese and Pavia, where she graduated in medicine and surgery and specialised in neurology and endocrinology. Pavia was also where, at the C. Mondino Institute of Neurology, she began her career as a university researcher, before moving to the University of Varese. From 2000, she was an associate professor of neurology, first at the University of Novara and then at that of Varese.

On the international stage, the work Emilia did in the Himalayas, studying autonomic nervous system adaptation at high altitudes with researchers from Albuquerque, was among her most important and precious experiences. Professionally, she was well known nationally and internationally for her expertise and role in research and innovative clinical trials. She was a member, and also formerly a board member, of LIMPE. In collaboration with LIMPE, she produced guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of Parkinson's disease, aimed at Italian neurologists.

As a friend – and she was a friend to a great many people – Emilia was a discrete presence, helpful, sometimes stubborn, but always accepting of others, despite acknowledging their faults, errors and, sometimes, their pettiness. And we still feel her presence among us.

Antonietta Citterio

[...tibi enim inconsumpta iuventa est
   tu puer aeternus...]

Ovidio, Metamorphoses, Liber IV