

Michele U. Fratianni

Harry S Truman is quoted as saying he wanted a one-armed economist because he was tired of hearing duplicitous economic advice—on the one hand this and the other hand that. It is too bad that Michele Fratianni was too young to come to President Truman's rescue. Truman would have appreciated Fratianni's thoughtful but decisive style. Others were more lucky. President Ronald Reagan, the Commission of the European Communities, the Italian Ministry of Industry, the Italian Ministry of the Treasury, and many other organizations got the benefit of Michele's crystal-clear policy advice.

Truman also would have appreciated a chance to chat with a person whose knowledge knows few boundaries. No stranger to economics, Fratianni in conversation could easily stray to history, painting, or Michele's real passion, cooking. *Al dente* might mean a little something to most of us—to Fratianni it is just another opportunity to teach a history lesson about the correct preparation of a noodle.

Michele was born and raised in Italy where he graduated from high school. He then continued his studies at The Ohio State University where he received a B.A. (cum laude) and an M.A. in economics in 1967, and stayed on to complete his Ph.D. four years later. In 1971 he joined IU's Department of Business Economics and Public Policy, his primary academic home for the next 35 years. From 1993 to 1997 he was the school's AMOCO Faculty Fellow, and from 1998 to retirement he has been the first W. George Pinnell Professor of Business Economics and Public Policy. He has been chair of the Department of Business Economics and Public Policy since 1997. He held visiting faculty positions at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium; Marquette University in Milwaukee; the Free University of Berlin; the Catholic University of Milan; and the University of Rome.

Michele is the author or co-author of 19 books and more than 100 articles dealing with macroeconomics, monetary economics, international finance, and public choice. He was the founding and managing editor of *Open Economies Review* for 15 years, developing that journal to become a leading source of scholarship on monetary systems, trade liberalization, and economic transformation. Some of Michele's most notable publications include *The Monetary History of Italy* (1997), *The European Monetary System and European Monetary Union* (1992), and *Regional Economic Integration* (2006). His work has been recognized with several prestigious awards, including the Medal of the President of the Italian Republic for scientific achievements (1982), the Scanno Prize in Economics (1991), and the St. Vincent Prize in Economics (1992).

Perhaps the best way to describe Michele that brings together most of his life currents is that he is and always will be the teacher. During his career Fratianni taught every level of student about money, monetary policy, macroeconomics, and international trade. Just a glance at his CV shows that he taught just about anyone who would listen: financial analysts; Baltic, Russian, and Vietnamese bankers; finance students in Italy; Indiana undergraduate business students in Maastricht, Netherlands; and many more. As a colleague, he taught his co-authors about a fierce single-minded, no excuses, no compromise pursuit of truth. As a department chair, he helped all of us understand the need for growth and change and the importance of both energy and diplomacy in bringing it about. The many doctoral students he advised quickly learned that Michele took on no projects lightly and that he viewed his relationship with them in parental terms. No stranger to both positive and negative motivation, he felt few qualms about using a variety of techniques to move these students from novice to confident, aspiring scholars.

Fratianni's influence is well exhibited through an experience Professor Larry Davidson and he shared in the Baltic countries. Moved by the frustration of the bankers they met in these three countries, they could not know then that the bankers would soon be freed from the control of the Soviet Union and be able to take advantage of advice about currency choice and monetary policy. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Fratianni and Davidson quickly found ways to bring their newfound colleagues to Bloomington for a course in central banking and monetary policy. They clearly recall the look on the face of one of the younger bankers from Latvia who was thrilled and

motivated when Michele explained to him that monetary policy could be made independent of the national government. He was so thrilled that upon his return to Riga and his appointment as the central bank president, he moved quickly to have an unsuspecting parliament approve a bill that made the bank independent. Though branded by some as a national traitor because of his subsequent refusal to lend money to a spendthrift government, Einars Repse served with distinction as central bank president until he became prime minister of Latvia. His tough but highly successful policies were no doubt very much the prodigy of Professor Michele Fratianni.

In retirement Michele will continue his research and interaction with colleagues worldwide. He will have a formal academic appointment with a university in Italy and be a distinguished fellow at the IU Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER). However, he will have more time to spend with his wonderful wife, Shelley, and his children as they all enjoy travel, fine food and wine, and time together.

Larry S. Davidson
Bruce L. Jaffee