

19 March 2014

Dear friends and colleagues,

I am writing to some share some terrible news. On Thursday evening (March 13, 2014) our dear friend Evamaria Koch passed away.

Eva bravely fought lung cancer for a year, then most recently the cancer spread further until nothing more could be done.

I cannot tell you the sadness I felt when I heard this news, which landed completely unexpected, as Eva chose not to share news about her health with colleagues. Most of you know how much I cared for Evamaria. She was a close friend and a mentor for me. I remember when I was still a PhD student, how much she supported me from afar, and she and I co-authored my first peer-review publication. In 2005, Eva convinced me to move to the US to take a position at UMCES on the eastern shore of Maryland. That choice shaped much of my career from there onwards. When I arrived in the US, Evamaria was the only person I knew, and she was for a while my family. I will never forget spending time with both Eva and her daughter Olga. Evamaria and I shared many great moments, sampling seagrasses in the Chesapeake Bay, traveling to conferences and spending time discussing research ideas at all hours of the day. I even remember celebrating Italy's World Cup win in 2006 with Eva and Olga, together with Tim Carruthers and many other friends at UMCES. I am sure that you all have similar memories.



Aside from my personal considerations, Evamaria was an internationally respected scientist. She had a PhD in Marine Sciences from the University of South Florida and she held the position of Assistant Professor at Horn Point Laboratory – UMCES since 1995 and she then became Associate professor in 2001. Eva published more than 50 papers, of which two in the journal Science, on seagrasses with a specific focus on coastal protection, hydrodynamics and seagrass-sediment interactions.



Eva's favourite quote was "*If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?*" by Albert Einstein. This demonstrates her passion for science and specifically for seagrasses. Eva enjoyed tremendously spending time fleshing out new ideas and projects, SCUBA diving on seagrass beds and setting up experiments. I remember the many

fun days spent on a boat in the Chesapeake Bay just like I will never forget how she proved me wrong on a number of theories about the effects of temperature and sediments on seagrasses.



Eva mentored a large number of students, masters and PhDs, and always dedicated herself to teaching both in the USA, Zanzibar and Brazil. Eva was a supporter of global science initiatives, believing in the need to establish collaboration across countries and continents. For this reason she supervised students overseas, and in 2006 she co-organised the 7th International Seagrass Biology Workshop. In addition, Eva was one of the pioneers of global seagrass monitoring networks, working with Fred Short, Rob Coles and Miguel Fortes in establishing and running SeagrassNet, a project she strongly believed in.

As for the WSA, Evamaria participated actively in the governance of WSA, being a founding member of the Association and a Steering Committee member since 2002. She always attended meetings and contributed to building the Association to what it is today. We are proud to have had the pleasure to cross paths with such a talented and dedicated person.

I will always remember Eva and I will continue to dedicate to her my passion and knowledge of seagrasses. I hope you will join me in taking a moment for Eva, in memory of all the good moments we lived with her and to reflect on what are the things in life that count the most.

For those who knew Eva and would like to share their stories and memories, WSA would be happy to collect these to share with Eva's family and particularly for her daughter, whom we are sure will eventually want to hear what a great scientist her mother was. For those who would like to make a donation in Eva's name, her family has selected the World Seagrass Association to collect these donations. The WSA will establish the "*Evamaria Koch student travel fund*" in memory of Evamaria. This award will assist students to attend future ISBWs.

The thoughts and condolences of the WSA go to Eva's family and most especially to Olga, Eva's daughter.

I wish you all the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Giuseppe Di Carlo'.

Dr. Giuseppe Di Carlo

*President*

*World Seagrass Association Inc.*

