

Obituaries

Giorgio Massobrio: 1927–2010

A leader with an “iron fist and velvet glove”

By Steve Stecyk



Born in Genoa, Italy, a city renowned for its Renaissance culture, Giorgio Massobrio played a central role in the modern rebirth of the steelmaking industry both in Italy and Quebec.

He graduated *magna cum laude* in electrical engineering from the University of Genoa in 1951 and shortly thereafter began his career at ITALSIDER steel company. He took part in the Marshall Plan, the massive U.S.-directed European reconstruction initiative

following World War II, training at ARMCO Steel Corp in the United States, and helped in the rebuilding of the Italian Steel industry. Massobrio eventually rose through the ranks and was appointed executive vice-president of ITALSIDER in 1971 and was elected to its board of directors. In 1974, he was appointed *Commendatore della Repubblica Italiana*, a distinguished honour bestowed upon him for his role in the reconstruction of the Italian Steel industry.

Massobrio brought his talents and fortitude to Canada in 1977, where he accepted a position at United States Steel Corp. He later went on to become the president and CEO of its subsidiary, Québec Cartier Mining, from 1980 to 1992, and was chairman of the board until 1994.

In 1989, CIM awarded him with the prestigious INCO Medal for his contribution to the restructuring of the iron ore industry in Quebec. He was later elected president of CIM in 1995–1996 and was credited for steering CIM back onto a solid financial path. Don Worth, incoming CIM president at the time, thanked him for successfully applying his senior executive talents to the challenge of balancing the Institute’s books. “We needed his iron fist and velvet glove,” said Worth.

Massobrio continued to apply his expertise as the general chairman of the CIM Centennial Conference Organizing Committee in 1998. In recognition of his contribution as past president and hard work toward the centennial celebrations, he was awarded the CIM Distinguished Service Medal in 2000. He also served as the director of the Mining Association of Canada and as a board member of Le Conseil du Patronat de Montréal.

Massobrio was also the author of many technical papers on open hearth and basic oxygen steelmaking, as well as the use of computers for production control and management information systems. Throughout his life, Massobrio met many challenges, which he faced head on and with success and dignity. He passed away on September 4, 2010.