

Eulogy

Stephen Francis Biagi

Mirella Biagi

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“Stephen was born in 1949 in Renfrew, the middle child of Tony and Leana Biagi, with his older brother Michael and younger sister Teresa. From an early age he showed the resilience and determination that would come to define him.

Stephen attended St James’ Primary and later St Joseph’s College boarding school, where he excelled in his studies. His school years were interrupted when he contracted tuberculosis and spent much of his fourth year in hospital. Even then, he studied from his bed and sat his O-levels—a sign of his perseverance and sharp, logical mind.

After school, Stephen went on to Manchester University, where he studied physics and completed a PhD. For his graduation present, he received a beach buggy kit based on a VW Beetle chassis. Building it proved a challenge, and professional help was called in, but Stephen loved the finished car. He drove it proudly to university, despite having no protection from the weather.

His scientific career began and ended with CERN, first at the Rutherford Lab in Oxford and then in Geneva. In 1982, while already dating his future wife Marie, he moved to Liverpool University, where he remained for more than two decades while continuing collaborations with CERN. Stephen and Marie married in 1986, and two years later welcomed their daughter, born during the Marian Year of 1988—something Stephen would often reflect on as part of his deep devotion to Mary. Together, they built a loving family grounded in faith, kindness, and quiet strength.

Later, Stephen retired home to Glasgow—though he continued working right up until his death. In his later years, he developed a love for golf, enjoying the quiet focus and challenge it offered. He also enjoyed mushroom hunting, a hobby he had learned from Marie’s father before they were married. Ever the private and methodical man, he never revealed his secret locations to anyone. These hobbies reflected the same curiosity, precision, and delight in discovery that marked both his scientific work and his everyday life.

What exactly Stephen did for a living was always something of a mystery to those outside his field. His intelligence seemed to operate on a level apart from most people, and when asked about his work, he would simply say, “It’s too complicated to explain.” Family friends joked that he must have been working

for MI5. But colleagues knew the truth. After his passing, tributes poured in from around the world. They described him as a brilliant physicist whose work in detector and plasma physics remains indispensable. They spoke not just of his intellect but of his generosity, humility, and dry wit.

But Stephen was never defined only by his career. He was a man of deep kindness and quiet reliability. After his father died, he visited his mother every week and took her shopping. When his cousin and closest friend became ill, he took him out for lunch every Thursday. To name but a few. He gave his time faithfully to the community, serving on the community council and as treasurer for Friends of Victoria Park. He rarely asked for help himself, but he was always there when others needed him.

Those who knew him will remember his stubbornness—often because he was right—and his immense logic. He wasn't always the easiest man to debate with, but he was always honest, straightforward, and quietly generous with his time. His methodical way of thinking was matched by deep compassion, making him both a remarkable scientist and a remarkable man.

At the centre of Stephen's life was his faith. The rosary was his comfort in prayer, and his final words were the Hail Mary. In later years he spoke often of how much he missed Marie, convinced she remained close to him. His faith gave him courage in illness and peace at the end.

We remember Stephen as a brilliant scientist, a man of strong faith, and above all, someone who lived with kindness, determination, and devotion. His family, friends, and colleagues can be proud of the legacy he leaves behind—in science, in his community, and in the lives of those he touched."