

OBITUARY – PAOLO TRINCHERO, SAISC CEO

Farewell to a man with a heart of steel – and gold.

The Board and team at the Southern African Institute of Steel Construction (SAISC), together with local and international members and colleagues, mourn the loss of the SAISC's CEO, Paolo Trincherio, who passed away on Sunday the 21st of August, at the age of 53, after a brave battle with cancer. Paolo was the CEO for the past 9 years, since 2013.

Paolo was involved in the steel industry for some 30 years, having graduated with a BSc in Civil Engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand ('Wits') in 1990. Following this, Paolo completed his master's degree in 1993, where he was introduced to the workings of the SAISC through the Steel Design Code Committee. After spending some additional time as a lecturer at Wits, Paolo joined the SAISC in 1998 as a Consulting Development Engineer and Technology Director.

To gain some commercial experience, he then joined Macsteel Trading as an Engineering Manager in 2003 to start its cellular beam division, and ultimately became Group Business Development and Technical Director at Macsteel Corporate Services. Throughout his 11 years at Macsteel, Paolo never lost touch with the SAISC and in 2013, he returned to the Institute as its CEO.

Passionate about steel

Paolo was passionate about anything related to steel: from its many practical applications in projects to the annual celebration of its many uses in the annual Steel Awards – which Paolo presided over with great pride as many will fondly remember – and in the technical knowledge-sharing SAISC breakfasts, sessions and other forums he led over the years. He was equally passionate about communicating steel's myriad uses and applications throughout industry and in daily life – and the importance and relevance of the SAISC as a representative industry body.

Paolo was also a tireless, selfless and dedicated champion of the steel sector at public and private sector levels doing everything he could for the good of the sector, in the face of the last few very challenging years which it has faced. In this regard, all facets of innovation – including 'green' or renewable steel – really fascinated him, and he was a strong proponent of innovation and sustainability throughout the sector.

Paolo was an enthusiastic driver of the steel sector's participation in the development of pan-African infrastructure from mining projects to commercial high-rise buildings and other steel structures.

As if all the above did not keep him busy enough, Paolo was also involved in several projects – from conception through to fabrication – in Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.

"I knew Paolo since 2011 when I joined the Institute, and he was a member of the board. Paolo was absolutely dedicated to the interests of the steel industry and his colleagues – there was nothing that he wouldn't do to promote structural steel. He was unique in mixing both technical and business acumen to promote the industry's agenda, which allowed him to be on Industry Policy committees while also serving on Technical committees.

"Given all the industry turmoil during his tenure, I think it is fair to say that Paolo's greatest contribution to the local steel construction industry is that today, the Steel Institute in South Africa is still in existence – and which, incidentally, is one of only 6 such institutes around the world" – Amanuel Gebremeskel, SAISC Acting CEO.

"Having worked with Paolo for just under 7 years, I can say that he employed a calm and measured, considerate, and diplomatic approach



to his work. Paolo was methodical and disciplined and understood the intricacies of the industry. He was able to engage with role players from all parts of the value chain, with respect – motivated by a deep desire to see people and business succeed.

An academic at heart, Paolo's 'happy place' was sharing his passion and knowledge to equip the next generation of engineers. Heartfelt messages of condolence have been pouring in from former Wits students, sharing what an ongoing impact he had on their career development. Sadly, because of the decrease in education funding, the SAISC's ability to engage extensively with universities diminished over the years. Paolo poured a tremendous amount of effort into trying to win back that financial support. Industry turmoil took a heavy toll on him. As a way of honouring his legacy, the SAISC is setting up a 'New Generation' education fund aimed at reinvigorating university engagement programmes which support sustainability, growth and innovation in the steel sector.

I concur with Amanuel in saying the fact that we still have an Institute is a credit to Paolo's character, and his ability to steer the ship through troubled waters to explore new horizons. He understood that the strength of the industry – and the Institute – lay in technical competence and a sense of community. I hope that his legacy of care, concern and technical strength will live on in the people and the Institute which he leaves behind," – Denise Sherman, SAISC Marketing Director.

Paolo leaves behind his beloved wife Lora and their three children, Giulio, Angelo and Sabrina. He was a dedicated family man, and our thoughts and prayers are with them during this sad and difficult time.

A heart of steel – and gold

It has been an honour and privilege working with him - Paolo was our highly respected leader, our colleague, and our friend. We will remember him for generously and enthusiastically sharing his immense skill, wisdom, and knowledge for the good of the steel industry. We celebrate Paolo for the lasting positive impact he has had on the industry and on the lives of many in our sector. He truly was a 'man with a heart of steel – and gold'.

We will miss you deeply Paolo, but are inspired by your example to continue your wonderful work in the steel sector.

Rest in peace.

The Board and team of the SAISC