PREFACE

These Conference Proceedings are one of the best ways we can pay homage to Virpi since she passed away shortly after the *Massive Stars: Fundamental Parameters and Circumstellar Interactions* meeting took place in December 2006. Almost every Virpi colleague had travelled down to Cariló to join her for the celebration of a fruitful career in astronomy. Fruitful both in astrophysical research and in establishing friendship links throughout the globe. Therefore, a gathering of astronomers fullfilling these two aspects of Virpi's life had no chance but to be a wonderful meeting indeed.

Virpi had already organised three international scientific workshops at La Plata in the previous decade. Although very succesful that they were, she regretted that being held in a large town, it reduced chances of interaction in the "off-hours". The Facultad de Ciencias Astronómicas y Geofísicas de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata organised, for the very first time in local history, an international meeting away from the protecting environment provided by the organising institution. The managing effort was rewarded by the high level of interaction between participants at lunchtime, by the seaside and walking through the dark woods under the Milky Way light. Virpi had always also enjoyed lively discussions after conference talks, and we had plenty of them. With the aid of all participants who completed their question and answer sheets, most of these have been included in this volume.

Our current knowledge about massive stars was discussed throughout all the scientific sessions. The topics of Wolf-Rayet stars were covered, including the effects of the interaction of their powerful stellar winds with binary companions and/or their circumstellar material. All aspects were considered: both theoretical and observational approaches and, among the latter, data presented and discussed covered the full electromagnetic spectrum. During the meeting, two exciting news were made: the staff at Observatorio Felix Aguilar honored Virpi's career by naming a newly discovered asteroid as "Asteroid 5289 Niemela KG2" and the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) had named her Associate in recognition to her contribution to astronomical research.

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We also want to thank the unvaluable collaboration provided by students from the FCAG and the Observatorio Astronómico de Córdoba (OAC). The readiness and availability of the staff at Hotel Marcín have also noticeably contributed to make it a joyful experience.

Sad news were to follow immediately after the meeting when we learned about Virpi's decease. Those who attended the meeting had, without knowing it, a last chance to greet her in person and let her know how far she had contributed to the research subject she loved most. These Proceedings are our humble contribution to her memory and we hope they are able to share the experience with the rest of the astronomical community.

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Editors of the Proceedings