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“Ottavio Missoni was an exceptional person”

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“We all **have a relative who works at Missoni**. We’ve lost a great man.” This was the overall feeling among the people of **Sumirago**, a few hours after the news of the death of the designer. Everybody was very discreet, just as the Missoni family had been for years: it was another form of respect for a family **that has given Sumirago a lot**, from jobs, to supporting the many associations, sporting and non. After his admission to hospital, on 30 April, and his subsequent discharge, his family asked for maximum discretion. Even the mayor, **Mauro Croci**, accepted the request, and issued an order **that forbade entering the street where the company stands, and the house**.

In the village, few people admitted that they had known him personally, but they all **described him as a great person**, who had done a lot, even for the village in which he lived, so much so that he had wanted his company, **where 25 people still work today**, to remain there. A former councillor said, “I remember, with amusement, the important people who came through here to meet him. He was a very discreet person, he didn’t talk a lot; **he had his own way of expressing his affection for the village**. I remember the time, over 25 years ago, when Gianni Brera, Cesare Rubini and Walter Chiari came here, and told each other stories in the bar, as though it was a normal occurrence in our country village.”

Franco, Missoni’s driver for 37 years, who was at the Post Office, collecting the correspondence of the company, which has kept working, was clearly emotional. “I was with him for a lifetime; I’ve just been to his house **to offer his widow my condolences**,” he said, keeping back the tears. “We often travelled together, and I would accompany him, especially recently, when it was hard for him to drive.”

Franco had no hesitation in describing Ottavio Missoni a “**an exceptional person**, and that’s saying little. He continued to come to the company until a short time ago, he had his things to

do, and he was always active. Now I live with what he taught me over the years: **I learnt everything from him**, how to live, how to communicate with people, even how to make everybody feel at ease. With him, nobody felt out of place, **he was an exceptional person.**"

This was also the opinion of those who did not want to speak yet. "We knew him, as everybody knew him," said a few passers-by, in a courtyard in the centre of the village. "There's nothing more to say, **just that we've lost a great person.**"

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redazione@varesenews.it