

EDITOR'S PREFACE

In June 1999 I was invited by the President of the Sleep Research Society to attend the 13th Annual Meeting of the American Sleep Disorders Association. Two months later, after my return to Pisa, I was sadly informed that Dr. Nathaniel Kleitman died, at the age of 104. The death of Dr. Kleitman has caused sincere regret to all the Italian researchers who were acquainted with his work. His discovery with Dr. **Engene Aserinsky** of a new phase of sleep, called REM sleep, represents one of the most prominent events in the field of sleep research during the last 50 years.

The *Archives Italiennes de Biologie*, which have a great tradition into the field of sleep physiology, having published in the past classical papers of the **Moruzzi** School of Neurophysiology, decided to dedicate a special publication to the memory of this pioneer of the modern sleep research.

I am particularly grateful to **Dr. J.M. Siegel**, who has been particularly effective in developing this initiative. All the invited Authors are researchers who have greatly contributed during the last decades to the advancement of our knowledges into different fields of basic and applied research on sleep physiology. By reading their papers one gets a real view of the impact that the studies of Dr. Kleitman exerted on the development of our discipline.

Because of the large number of invited contributors, we could not include all their papers in the present issue. The remaining papers will appear in the forthcoming issue of the *Archives*.

Ottavio Pompeiano