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OBITUARY

RECOLLECTIONS OF VITALII BORISOVICH LEONT'EV

The scientific community of Uzbekistan has suffered a grievous loss — the great scientist, one of the leading specialists in the field of bioorganic chemistry, Doctor of Chemical Sciences, Professor VITALII BORISOVICH LEONT'EV has suffered untimely death in the 66th year of his life.

After graduating from the chemical faculty of the Central Asian State University (now the Mirzo Ulugbek Tashkent State University), Vitalii Borisovich Leont'ev began his scientific activity in the problem laboratory of the chemistry of natural compounds, his link with which continued until the end of his life.

His main scientific interests were directed to investigating the structure and reactivity of complex compounds — alkaloids and their heterocyclic analogs and derivatives. He was one of the first in Uzbekistan to introduce into the practice of chemical investigations an arsenal of radiospectroscopic, optical, and other physicochemical methods. An original theoretical approach to deciphering the structures of natural compounds in combination with the most recent experiments permitted him to develop new branches of bioorganic chemistry in the field of the conformational analysis of natural compounds.

V. B. Leont'ev was one of the organizers of the Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Within the framework of the institute under his direction new scientific directions of bioorganic chemistry were created and developed that were connected with the study of the mechanisms of the regulation of the genetic apparatus and the structures and functions of the most important biopolymers — the nucleoprotein complexes of chromatin, nuclear proteins, glycoproteins, and other biologically important molecules and systems. In all these investigations he also creatively employed the very latest mathematical methods using computer technique. This approach, begun with university studies on the structure and reactivity of the dipyridyl and quinolizidine alkaloids, was developed in an investigation of the nature of protein—nucleic acid interactions and then in work on the mathematical modeling of the systems responsible for biological "recognition."

The broad erudition of V. B. Leont'ev, his profound knowledge in various fields of the natural sciences, and his special nontrivial approach to the selection and solution of scientific problems enabled him to be a founder and an active participant in the most various developments, including cosmic biotechnology and microbiological methods of extracting gold from ores, high-temperature superconductivity, and hybridoma technology. These and many other of his activities were truly pioneering.

V. B. Leont'ev belonged to the category of scientists with a high creative potential and a broad range of interests; among his pupils and successors there are many specialists well known today — chemists, physicists, and biologists.

The bright memory of Vitalii Borisovich Leont'ev will always remain with all who knew him.

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