

Martin Ostoja-Starzewski · Vitali F. Nesterenko

Dedication

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This issue of *Acta Mechanica* is dedicated to the 70th birthday of Professor Joe D. Goddard. It includes papers presented and discussed in the Symposium *Mechanics of Heterogeneous Media*, held in his honor in the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign at the 45th *Annual Meeting of Society of Engineering Science*, October 12–15, 2008. The location of the symposium carried a symbolic meaning, as it represented a kind of “homecoming” to Joe’s *Alma Mater*. We consider it a privilege to act as guest editors of this issue.

Original papers presented in this issue are authored by researchers whose scientific interests are related to the broad spectrum of Joe’s own research. They include theoretical, numerical and experimental research reports covering deformation, flow and failure of mesoscale materials (granular, fiber networks, fractal media, soft tissues) as well as wave propagation of linear and nonlinear waves in low- and three-dimensional granular materials. We believe that this collection of work reflects the broad interests of Joe’s scientific work. We have also asked him to reflect on his life and scientific career—or, in his own words, the “trajectory we call life”—and he responded with the article immediately following.

We extend sincere thanks to all the authors who contributed to this issue, for which the manuscripts were reviewed according to the rules of *Acta Mechanica*, and we thank them for cooperation throughout the whole process.

M. Ostoja-Starzewski (✉)
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL, USA
E-mail: martinost@illinois.edu

V. F. Nesterenko
University of California, San Diego, CA, USA