Lev Vasil'evich Nikitin **(November 17, 1931–March 30, 2010)**

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Lev Vasil'evich Nikitin, passed away on March 30, 2010. He was one of the oldest researchers at the Schmidt Institute of Physics of the Earth of the Russian Academy of Sciences, principal researcher at the Laboratory of Geomechanics, Doctor of physical and mathematical sciences, Professor, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, winner of the A. Humbolt International Prize, member of the Russian National Committee for Theoretical and Applied Mechanics, UNESCO expert, member of the International Society for the Interaction of Mechanics and Mathematics, member of the Scientific Council of the Faculty for Mechanics and Mathematics of the Lomonosov Moscow State University in the speciality “Mechanics of Solids,” and member of the Editorial board of the journal “Izvestiya RAN. Mekhanika Tverdogo Tela” (Mechanics of Solids). Professor Nikitin was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labor. Earlier, he was a member of the Scientific Councils of several other scientific institutions and institutes, participated in the work of the Planning Committee of the International Deep-Water Drilling Project, and for many years had been a member of the Expert Council of the Higher Attestation Commission (VAK) of the USSR and Russian Federation.

In 1965, L. V. Nikitin was transferred from the Institute for Problems of Mechanics of the USSR Academy of Sciences to the Institute of Physics of the Earth, where he began as senior researcher and later became Head of the “Laboratory of Mechanics of Oceanic Structures” and Head of the “Laboratory of Geomechanics.” He had graduated from the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, where he went from student to professor of the Chair of Continuum Mechanics. In the recent years he was professor of the Chair of Wave and Gas Dynamics at the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics of the Lomonosov Moscow State University.

Professor Nikitin’s scientific activity was extremely versatile. It was based on mechanics of solids and on its numerous applications in various areas of applied sciences and engineering. A large series of papers were devoted to fracture mechanics, especially, its dynamical applications in the mechanics of earthquake source. His papers in crack mechanics had become classical a long time ago; numerous researches had studied on them. Professor Nikitin’s scientific interests combined modeling of the behavior of solids (ground materials, rocks, living tissues), modeling of geological structures, and studying problems of geodynamics and stability of rock strata. He analyzed wave propagation through media and structures that, apart from elastic properties, also possess plastic, viscous, and damage properties, can have a prestressed state and interact with the environment or other structures. He studied the behavior of rheologically unstable materials and processes of strain localization in narrow zones, as well as processes of solid-state phase transitions. In collaboration with his colleagues and pupils, Professor Nikitin published four monographs and more than 150 scientific papers in domestic and international journals and paper collections.

Until very recently, Lev Vasil'evich actively participated in the scientific life of the Schmidt Joint Institute of Physics of the Earth of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He never refused to consult his colleagues at the institute and always readily helped young scientists. Due to his kind, openhearted, and charismatic personality, he always was a center of attraction for creative people. The bright image of Lev Vasil'evich Nikitin will forever remain in the hearts of his colleagues, numerous friends, pupils, and those who met this wonderful man and outstanding scientist.