

Sad News from the IUGG Secretary General Two Eminent Scientists Passed Away Oct 2013

Professor Vladimir Keilis-Borok

On 19 October 2013, Professor Vladimir Keilis-Borok, former President of IUGG (1987-1991), passed away at his home in Los Angeles, California, at the age of 92. He was a world-renowned mathematical geophysicist who spent the last three decades of his life understanding nonlinear processes in the Earth's lithosphere, which lead to earthquakes. He developed a distinguished group of experts in mathematical geophysics who contributed to the theory of earthquake predictions. There are not many scientists who consider that earthquakes can be predicted, but it was not the case of Volodya. He always claimed that "earthquakes can and should be predicted. It is a challenging task, but we should not give up". Volodya liked to quote Winston Churchill when he heard concerns from others about his earthquake prediction endeavours: "This is not the beginning of the end, it's the end of the beginning".

Volodya's friend, Frank Press (the Science Adviser to US President Jimmy Carter and former President of the US National Academy of Sciences), wrote two years ago on the occasion of his 90th birthday: "Volodya, your career in science has been both creative and controversial - the same characterization that can be said of Fred Hoyle, Linus Pauling, even Albert Einstein. Knowing you, I am sure that age will be no impediment and that you will continue to put forward new concepts, that will stimulate much discussion, not only in geophysics but in the social sciences as well." Unfortunately, life is limited, and Volodya can no longer "put forward new concepts", but his students around the world will continue his work. Volodya will be remembered by his family, friends, and colleagues as a great man and a great scientist.

Prof. Duzheng Ye

On 16 October 2013, Prof. Duzheng Ye, former Bureau Member of IUGG (1987-1995), passed away in Beijing, China, at the age of 98. He was a world-renowned meteorologist, who investigated the now well-established research efforts devoted to Tibetan Plateau meteorology; discovered the seasonal abrupt change of atmospheric general circulation over Asia; developed the theory of atmospheric longwave energy dispersion, and therefore provided the theoretical basis for modern atmospheric longwave forecasts. He proposed the atmospheric movement adaptation theory, which has since been applied to weather forecasting, and expanded global change research by building a framework of "orderly human activities" in the context of a life-supporting environment. Prof. Duzheng Ye fully dedicated his life to his profession and his country. He will be remembered for his leadership, innovation, generosity and kindness. His passing is a great loss to the science community and he will be dearly missed.

These two great scientists and leaders of international scientific communities will be remembered by IUGG scientists.

Alik Ismail-Zadeh
IUGG Secretary General