

## CHRONICLE

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## VYACHESLAV NIKOLAEVICH KONISHCHEV

(14.02.1938–21.07.2020)

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Vyacheslav Nikolaevich Konishchev, Doctor of Geography, Professor of the Lomonosov Moscow State University passed on July 21, 2020, after a prolonged illness. Having worked all his life at Moscow University and for 24 years heading the Department of Cryolithology and Glaciology, Vyacheslav Nikolaevich made a huge contribution to the development of science and education in the field of research on permafrost.

*Frozen ground, permafrost zone, loess-like deposits, Ice Complex, cryogenic contrast coefficient*



Vyacheslav Konishchev was born on February 14, 1938 in Moscow. In 1955 he enrolled in the Faculty of Geography of Moscow State University, which he graduated in 1960 with a degree in physical geography. Since then, he has forever linked his life with Moscow State University, moving from a senior laboratory assistant to a professor. In 1965 Konishchev defended his Ph.D. thesis “Genesis and paleogeographic conditions for the formation of loess-like cover in the eastern part of the Bolshezemelskaya tundra”, and in 1978 his doctoral dissertation titled “Cryogenic weathering as a factor in the formation of loess-like deposits in Northern Eurasia”.

V.N. Konishchev became an internationally renowned permafrost scientist and geographer, teacher

and organizer. He published over 250 scientific and educational-methodical works, including seven monographs and nine textbooks, with several of his works published abroad. His research work was focused on the significance and geography of cryogenesis within the system of natural processes on Earth, the transformation of minerals in the permafrost zone, evolution and geoecological role of the Earth's cryosphere.

During his time at Moscow State University, he organized and conducted field research in various regions of Russian Arctic, participated in expeditions to the Canadian Arctic and high-mountainous region of Tibet. The materials obtained in these expeditions allowed him to solve a number of fundamental scien-

tific problems. He developed a fundamentally new understanding of stability of minerals, inherent only in the permafrost zone. On this theoretical basis, Konishchev discovered the cryogenic nature of the mineral matter of loess-like deposits; substantiated the polygenetic nature of the Ice Complex of Siberia and showed the leading role of cryogenesis in the formation of the mineral matter of these widespread deposits. One of his most famous monographs "Formation of the dispersed rocks composition in the permafrost zone" (1981) is devoted to this topic. The concept of the expanding Earth's cryosphere, proposed by Konishchev, has gained great scientific significance. In recent years, Konishchev developed the concept of the heterogenic response of various landscapes of the permafrost zone to climate change. His last monograph "Permafrost and Climate Change" (2012) is focused on this issue.

For more than half a century, Professor Konishchev has been active in teaching, combining exactingness and friendliness, high culture and professionalism, constant readiness to help students and early career scientists with advice and deeds. He taught classes on Foundations of Permafrost Science, Permafrost Regions and Evolution of Earth Cryosphere, and Methods of Permafrost Investigations. With his direct participation, textbooks on regional cryolithology and methods of cryolithological research were prepared and published between 1985 and 1995. Konishchev was a great proponent of outreach and actively participated in dissemination of permafrost information through interviews and popular media.

Professor Konishchev was a Chair of Department of Cryolithology and Glaciology from 1993 to 2017 – the only department in the world that trains specialists in the field of complex study of the Earth's cryosphere. He directed nine Ph.D. theses and one Doctor of Science. For many years Vyacheslav Nikolaevich conducted a great scientific and organizational work: for 16 years he worked as a deputy dean on scientific research at the Faculty of Geography of Moscow State University, from 1981 to 2016 he was Chairman of the Specialized Board of the Higher At-

testation Commission for the defense of doctoral and candidate's theses. At different years he was a member of the Scientific Council for Natural Sciences of Moscow State University, a member of the Academic Council of the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences, a member of the Expert Council of the State Committee on Education, a member of the Academic Council of the Faculty of Geography of Moscow State University and the Joint Council of the Russian Academy of Sciences on Earth Cryology. Konishchev was an active expert of the Russian Science Foundation (RSF), the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR) and Russian Presidents' funds for support of early career scientists and scientific schools. Konishchev was on the editorial board of *Vestnik MGU*, *Earth's Cryosphere*, *Engineering Geology*, and *Permafrost and Periglacial Processes*, among others. He was awarded the honorary title "Honored Scientist of the Russian Federation" in 1998 and "Honored Professor of Moscow State University" in 2004. Konishchev was a secretary of the Terminology Commission of the International Permafrost Association (IPA).

Vyacheslav Nikolaevich was among the founders of the journal *Earth's Cryosphere*. He participated in the formulating the journal's aims and scope, in the work of the editorial board and editorial group from the very beginning in 1997. Konishchev was involved in journal publishing process both organizationally and as an experienced reviewer. Taking a responsible approach to the peer review process, he often mentored young researchers, helping them systemize the data and deepen their conclusions. This tremendous work was carried out by him constantly since the foundation of the journal. Taking care of the journal's rating, he submitted his best articles to the journal, both original researches and reviews. These articles have invariably contributed to raising the journal's rating.

His colleagues and students remember him as an outstanding scientist, talented teacher, inspiring leader and a kind man.

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