

## IN MEMORY OF NIKOLAI IVANOVICH VASILIEV



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On 4 January 2021, our colleague and friend, Nikolai Vasiliev, professor at the St. Petersburg Mining University, chief designer of the Vostok ice core drills, and a tireless innovator in the field of drilling technology, died. He was 72.

Nikolai Vasiliev's name is inextricably linked to the most exciting achievements in the legendary venture to drill through nearly four kilometers of ice at Russia's Antarctic inland station, Vostok.

For many years he was the key person leading this project, which has played a vitally important role in the study of past climate change on our planet, and putting it into action. Under his leadership, and with his direct participation, Lake Vostok, the biggest subglacial lake on Earth, was unsealed, making it possible to study the core of accreted ice and giving hope that we may one day further explore this unique under-ice water body. Everyone who worked with Nikolai Vasiliev at Vostok knows that without his strong will, knowledge, professional intuition and skill, these achievements and the scientific discoveries associated with them would have been impossible.

In his spare time, Nikolai enjoyed spending time at his dacha on the bank of the Msta river in the Novgorod region, renovating his rustic country home, and sometimes catching trout with his hands in small forest creeks, as people used to do in this part of the world centuries ago. He had hoped one day to finally leave work behind and live there, away from city life.

Nikolai, known as Kolya to his friends and close colleagues, was someone who truly loved life, an optimist who never gave up, always working hard to find the right solutions even when things seemed completely hopeless. He was exceptionally charismatic, attracting a very diverse range of people to him. He was much loved and respected by many, both in Russia and abroad.

His untimely death is not only a tragedy for his family and painfully sad for those who worked with him, for those who knew and loved him, but also an irreparable loss for the entire Antarctic community.

Nikolai Vasiliev's name has long been indelibly written in the history of Antarctic research. The cherished memory of this extraordinary person will stay in our hearts for ever.