

With great sadness the JLab community has learned of the sudden passing of Maxim Polyakov (Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany, and Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Russia).

Maxim was an eminent scientist who made seminal contributions to hadronic physics and had a profound influence on the scientific program at JLab. He was one of the world's leading authorities in the spectroscopy of exotic hadrons, the theory of high-momentum transfer processes, the interpretation of the nucleon's quark/gluon structure, and other areas of non-perturbative QCD and mathematical physics. His work on pentaquark baryons in 1997 with D. Diakonov and V. Petrov revolutionized the field of baryon spectroscopy and initiated experimental programs world-wide, ranging from photo/electroproduction at JLab to hadroproduction at the LHC. His work on generalized parton distributions and hard exclusive processes in the 1990's and 2000's is fundamental to the modern view of nucleon structure and created the field of "hadron tomography," providing new concepts that allow us to explore the distribution of mass, angular momentum, and QCD forces in the nucleon. This work not only inspires the hadron structure program with the JLab 12 GeV Upgrade but also informs future initiatives such as the Electron-Ion Collider.

Maxim was born in the Irkutsk region of Siberia in 1966. He graduated from Leningrad State University in 1989, joined the Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, and received his PhD degree (Candidate of Science) under the supervision of D. Diakonov in 1993. He then made his home at Ruhr-University Bochum, where he ultimately became the intellectual leader of the hadronic physics group, inspired colleagues and students with his ideas, and created a truly unique network with researchers in Europe, Asia, and America. Following a brief appointment at the University of Liège, Belgium, in 2002, he returned to Bochum as Associate Professor (C3) in 2005 and remained there since then.

Maxim authored more than 180 publications, many of them top-cited and opening up new directions of research. His outstanding contributions are widely recognized and have received several awards, in particular the Sofia Kovalevskaya Prize in 2002. Equally important is his influence on the many young researchers that he educated and formed, and the innumerable insights and ideas that he shared with his collaborators.

Maxim lived his life with an intensity that is given only to few people. His commitment was absolute, and he followed his ideas regardless of the demands. He was an extremely caring person and deeply involved in the lives of his family, friends, and colleagues, often without regard for himself. Those of us who knew him personally will forever remember how he touched our lives and connected us with something that is larger than ourselves.

The JLab community has lost a great scientist and a dear friend to many of us. His influence on our field and our community will reach far into the future. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Maxim's family and friends.

*Sent by friends and colleagues of Maxim in the JLab community*