



With a very heavy heart we inform the WEBT collaboration about the death of **Dr. Valeri Larionov** on 14 December 2020 from complications following brain surgery. Valeri was born in Moldova, USSR on 17 October 1950. He graduated from Leningrad University in 1972 with a master's degree in astronomy and obtained the position of scientific researcher at the Astronomical Institute of Leningrad University (St. Petersburg University currently). Since then, for almost 50 yr, he worked tirelessly and diligently on astronomical research at the University. Until 1991 Dr. Larionov observed and taught students to observe at the Byurakan Astrophysical station located in Armenia, where Leningrad University built three telescopes with mirrors of ~ 0.5 m in diameter. Valeri's attention there was devoted to the telescope PIKS (Russian acronym for Receiver of Infra-Red Light). He and his wife Lyudmila (who is also an astronomer) spent months at Byurakan station carrying out IR observations of galactic X-ray binaries, transient X-ray sources, and cool carbon stars. Valeri became one of the best observers in the country and one of the best researchers in polarimetric observations. He defended his PhD in 1998 and in 2010 Dr. Larionov defended the second doctorate, which is awarded for the most prestigious achievements in science. His second doctorate was devoted to studying the multi-color photometric and polarimetric behaviour of blazars. In 2010 he became a head of the Astrophysical Laboratory at St. Petersburg University. Under his supervision, and with his direct participation, the laboratory constructed the 40 cm LX-200 telescope in St. Petersburg and the 70 cm AZT-8 telescope in Crimea, and

organized a photometric and polarimetric blazar patrol. Dr. Larionov and his group became prominent members of the WEBT campaign. He is the author of more than 385 papers published in scientific journals. He worked in collaboration with Pulkovo Observatory (St. Petersburg) and Campo Imperatore Observatory (Italy). He was a member of the international POLAMI and VLBA-BU-BLAZAR programs. It is now difficult to imagine a blazar conference without his participation.

Valeri was a highly accomplished scientist, greatly valued colleague, and cherished friend. He deeply loved his wife, two children, and two grandchildren. We will deeply miss his scientific productivity and leadership, his collegiality, and his friendship. We express our deep sympathy to Dr. Larionov's wife and family.

Svetlana Jorstad & Alan Marscher