

In memory of a colleague !



Artur S. Amirkhanian, age 73, passed away suddenly on Saturday, December 19, 2020, at his home in Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory as a result of acute cardiovascular failure. Artur was the Head of the laboratory of small telescopes, and also an employee of the Department of Astrochemistry, Astrobiology and Exoplanets in the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory. He lived the life of a conscientious and honest worker, a respected citizen of his country.

Artur Amirkhanian was born on July 20, 1947 in the city of Port Arthur, People's Republic of China (in those years - a joint naval base of the USSR and PRC), in the family of a military doctor. While in a secondary school (Baku city), Artur also gladly participated in the school astronomy club, where he built his first telescope-reflector (of 18 cm). With this telescope, he carried out quite skillful observations of the planets. Since 1975, having studied at the Yerevan State University in physics and astrophysics (1969-1973), and having served in the army for 2 years, he began working by profession at the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory, dealing with the operation of the new Byurakan 2.6-meter telescope, and did a lot in preparing it for the first light. Actually, Artur have a never-ending love for astronomy and incessant need to talk about his research, in general, and about methods he used, in particular. In practical work, Artur was appreciated for his business qualities, assertiveness and ability to achieve set goals. For example, Artur was the first in the BAO to obtain the spectra one of a faintest at that time magnitude galaxy with a 2.6 m telescope, using a 3-stage electro-optical converter tube (built independently from spare parts in 1978 !) And V.A. Ambartsumyan's remark on such a message: "Oh, new prospects are opening up for us." One may remember also the visit of E.M. Lifshitz at the BAO in 1979, when Artur showed the guest the 2.6 m telescope and asked him about the nonzero neutrino mass. Artur could very quickly set up a very complex electronic-optical system, was distinguished by phenomenal memory and knowledge in almost all areas of technics and technologies. His ability to calculate the benefits from the use of any new telescopic system with any electronic amplifier, often on fingers, could be envied by many design departments! In 1988 A. Amirkhanian defended his Ph.D. thesis "Methods and results of studies of compact groups of galaxies" on spectrophotometry of galaxies in compact clusters. It should be emphasized that Artur was a unique specialist in the field of astro-instrumentation in general, and in the preparation of these very complex systems for operation, in particular !

The memory of him will forever remain in our hearts. A. Amirkhanian was buried in the village cemetery, in the Byurakan.