

IN MEMORIAM SIEGFRIED FRANCK



Prof. Dr. Siegfried Franck was born 1952 in Annaberg-Buchholz. He studied physics at Leipzig University and obtained his PhD in 1978 for a dissertation about the theory of phase transitions. Soon after he joined the Zentralinstitut für Physik der Erde in Potsdam. He was awarded the degree “Dr. sc. nat.” in 1984. In 1989 he was appointed Professor of Geophysics at the German Academy of Sciences. From 1992 to 1996 he worked as a member of the programme for integration of the east-german scientists at the Potsdam University. In 1997, he established his own research group at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), focusing on the structure and evolution of the Earth and other planets. His key interest was co-evolution of the geo- and biosphere. In 2004 Siegfried Franck was appointed to a personal chair at the Potsdam University. One of his important concerns was teaching of students, and he was particularly involved in the masters programme “Evolution Across Scales”. He continued his research at PIK.

His studies in astrobiology, e.g. about the habitability of planets around distant stars, were groundbreaking and well recognized internationally. His particular capacity was to connect disciplines such as geosciences, biology and astrophysics in a coherent framework, driven specifically by the question about the existence of life elsewhere in our cosmos. In his latest works, he also studied the question of the maximum carrying capacity of the planet Earth

in terms of the food supply.

In 2007 Dr. Franck attended the Young Scientists’ Conference on Astronomy and Space Physics (YSC), held annually at Kyiv University, for the first time with a lecture about the habitable zones in the extrasolar planetary systems. He won the audience with enthusiasm and smile, and became a good friend of the conference and young participants. After this he came three times to Kyiv for the 16th, 17th and 18th YSCs and always brought new interesting lectures and his passion to astrobiology to share it with young scientists. Just two weeks after the last, 18th, YSC Siegfried Franck unexpectedly passed away in the middle of his work life. For several years he was a member of the YSC scientific organizing committee and one of the most active conference participants. We have lost a real friend.

*YSC organizing committee*