

In Memoriam: Alexander I. Klimov (1943–2013)

Brian W.J. Mahy

It is with great sadness that we record the untimely death of Alexander (Sasha) Klimov, PhD, ScD, who passed away on February 5, 2013, at the age of 69. Dr. Klimov began his career at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, Georgia, USA, following a career of great distinction at the Research Institute for Viral Preparations in Moscow, Russia, where in 1986 he became director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center for Molecular Biology and Genetics of Epidemic and Vaccine Influenza Virus Strains and head of the Laboratory of Genetics of RNA Viruses. Dr. Klimov came to CDC in 1991 as a visiting scientist in the Influenza Branch, Division of Viral and Rickettsial Diseases, National Center for Infectious Diseases. In 1997, he became chief of the branch's Surveillance Section, and in 2006, after a reorganization of CDC, he became chief of the Surveillance and Diagnosis Branch within the newly formed Influenza Division, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

During 1986–2012, Dr. Klimov participated as an invited speaker at more than 30 consultations on influenza held at WHO in Geneva. In this regard, he played a vital role in the global tracking of influenza virus strains and in the selection of appropriate vaccines for use in different regions of the world. Dr. Klimov received numerous honors, including the CDC and ATSDR Civil Service Honor Award in 1998; CDC's Charles C. Shepard Award for scientific excellence in 2001; and the James H. Nakano Award for an outstanding scientific paper, National Center for Infectious Diseases, CDC, in 1996, 2001, and 2005. Dr. Klimov was also a regular reviewer of papers submitted to *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, the *Journal of Clinical Virology*, the *Journal of Virological Methods*, *Vaccine*, *Virology*, and *Virus Research*,



Alexander I. Klimov. Photograph provided by Penny Mahy.

and he was a member of the editorial board of *Voprosy Virusologii* (Russia). In addition, he authored or coauthored more than 200 peer-reviewed research publications.

I first met Sasha Klimov in 1981 when he visited my influenza laboratory in the Department of Pathology, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK, on a WHO Fellowship to study the molecular biology and genetics of influenza virus. I was immediately struck by the warmth and generosity of his personality, two characteristics that played an important role in his work as a mentor for his staff and the three PhD students whom he supervised. Sasha and I became close friends when we later met again in Moscow and at CDC. Dr. Klimov will be sorely missed by all who knew him. He leaves behind his wife, Marina Khristova, a virologist who worked on influenza virus in Moscow and who currently works in CDC's Biotechnology Core Facility Branch, as well as two children, a daughter, Tatiana, and a son, Peter, who is a composer living in Moscow.

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1905.IM0266>

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