Pavel Krejčí
Otto Vejvoda passed away

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NEWS AND NOTICES

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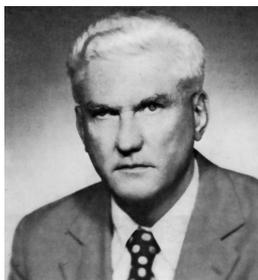
On April 13, 2009, a prominent Czech mathematician, Professor Otto Vejvoda, passed away in Prague. Born in Záboří nad Labem on June 4, 1922, he finished his secondary school in Prague in 1941. Czech universities were closed during the German occupation till 1945, and Otto Vejvoda was working as mathematics teacher during this time. He entered the Charles University in Prague in 1945 and graduated in Mathematics and Physics in 1949. His first mathematical interests were related to projective geometry, but very soon he turned to differential equations. His PhD Thesis from 1956 on stability of differential equations in the complex domain was supervised by V. Knichal at the Mathematical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague.

At the age of 40, he started losing his eyesight and eventually became completely blind a few years later. Despite this handicap, he did not give up mathematics and even switched to a new subject—partial differential equations. As Head of the Department of Evolution Differential Equations at the Mathematical Institute, he wrote together with his collaborators the book [1], which was to our knowledge the first systematic monograph on periodic solutions of partial differential equations in mathematical literature.

Otto Vejvoda was an excellent teacher and organizer. Under his supervision, thirteen graduate students (Z. Vorel, M. Jasný, J. Havlová, H. Petzeltová, V. Vítek, M. Tvrdý, V. Lovicar, M. Štědrý, J. Barták, L. Herrmann, I. Straškraba, P. Filip, P. Krejčí) completed their PhD degree. In the Mathematical Institute, he initiated a weekly seminar, which has gained high recognition among Prague mathematicians. He also founded in 1984 the regular Summer School on Evolution Equations "EVEQ" that since then has been taking place every four years. His yearly Autumn Schools on Partial Differential Equations in the 1980's were very popular in the engineering community.

Young members of his department were fascinated by his method of work. Being blind, he was receiving the information only by listening. In seminars, it was amazing how he was able to follow and to make qualified comments on the lecture. For the speaker, it was an excellent training to use an accurate language and avoid sentences like "We estimate this term by this constant"—it was necessary to specify *which* term and *which* constant. In his internal sight, Otto Vejvoda saw the equations and manifested an incredible intuition in solving mathematical problems.

All Otto Vejvoda's publications till 1981 are listed in note [2] dedicated to his 60th birthday. Below in [3]–[13], we amend this list by more recent items.

Otto Vejvoda retired officially in 1987, but he remained in active contact with his colleagues till the very end of his life. We shall miss his neverending optimism, inspiration, and encouragement.

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Pavel Krejčí, Editor-in-Chief

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