

Extract from OP-SF NET

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Subject: Andrei Aleksandrovich Gonchar 1931-2012

On the morning of October 10, 2012, Academician Andrei Aleksandrovich Gonchar passed away at the age of 80. Gonchar was born on November 21, 1931, in the city of St. Petersburg, Russia. He graduated from Moscow State University in 1954, defended his Candidate's (Ph. D.) thesis at the same university in 1957, under the supervision of S.N. Mergelyan, and defended his doctoral dissertation (D. Sc.) at the Steklov Mathematical Institute in 1964. Since 1972 he headed the section of Complex Analysis at Steklov. He became a corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Science in 1974 and a full member in 1987.

Gonchar's contributions involve a wide circle of problems in rational and harmonic approximation, convergence of continued fractions, classes of quasianalytic functions, asymptotic properties of orthogonal polynomials, and potential theory. Of particular impact have been his results concerning inverse type theorems in the theory of Padé approximation, the study of connections between the rate of convergence of best rational approximation and the analytic properties of the function being approximated, and his pioneering work using potential theory in the presence of an external field to obtain the asymptotic behavior of classes of orthogonal polynomials and the exact rate of convergence of best rational approximants. Gonchar was the founder of one of the leading scientific schools in Russia. His students include many Ph. D. and D. Sc. mathematicians. He was a defender of the classical analysts and his works were greatly influenced by them. The courses he taught at the university were brilliantly expounded and his lectures organized in a masterly way with great clarity, order, and a wealth of ideas.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, as Vice-President of the Russian Academy of Science (1991-1998), he played a major role in preserving the high quality of Russian mathematics by organizing the Russian Foundation for Basic Research. For over 25 years, he was the Editor-in-Chief of *Matematicheski Sbornik*, the oldest Russian mathematical journal.

Gonchar was not only a great scientist and an excellent scholar, but also a remarkable human being. He was distinguished by his warmth and concern for all of those that surrounded him.