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In Memoriam: Richard J. Goldstein



We report with great sorrow the passing of Professor Richard J. Goldstein on 6 March 2023 at the age of 94. He was truly a giant in the fields of thermal sciences research, engineering, and education, and is well known to everyone reading this memoriam. He was a friend and mentor to many throughout the world.

Professor Goldstein made major advances in optical measurement systems for fluid velocity and temperature, development of cooling designs widely used in high-performance gas turbines, and novel and important measurements in thermal convection. He pioneered laser Doppler velocimetry and hot-wire anemometry measurements and a variety of high-precision mass transfer based techniques to study free and forced convection. He was the first to experimentally confirm the critical Rayleigh number for instabilities in Rayleigh–Bénard convection with shear-free boundaries. His research has been presented across more than 300 scientific publications. His many studies on film cooling, including his ingenious use of shaped holes for film cooling of surfaces, along with his numerous investigations on jet impingement cooling, led to increased efficiency and reliability of high-performance gas turbines for power generation and aircraft propulsion. Many consider him to be the “father of film cooling.”

Professor Goldstein was born in New York City and graduated from Stuyvesant High School in 1944. After receiving his B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Cornell University in 1948, he went on to pursue his M.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering (1950) and Physics (1951) from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Subsequently, he joined the Oak Ridge National Laboratory as a Development Engineer in 1951. After a brief stint in the US Army as a first lieutenant, he returned to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in 1956 to pursue a Ph.D. degree in Mechanical Engineering under the guidance of Dr. Ernst R. G. Eckert. During his doctoral pursuits, he was a recipient of the Honeywell Fellowship (1955–57) and worked as an engineer for Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. After obtaining his doctorate (1959), Professor Goldstein joined the College of Engineering at Brown University as an Assistant Professor. Following a year at Brown University, he joined Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique as a NATO Postdoctoral Fellow (1960). He ultimately returned to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in 1961 as an Associate Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, wherein he progressively served as an Associate Professor (1961–1965), Professor (1965–1990), Department Head (1977–1997), Regents' Professor (1990–2018), and Regents' and James J. Ryan Professor Emeritus (2018–2023). He had a deep passion for teaching and creating opportunities for others. During his six-decade-long academic career, he mentored 74 doctoral and 82 master's students, as well as

several visiting and postdoctoral scholars.

Professor Goldstein established a very long record of service to the scientific and engineering community both domestically and internationally, including major leadership roles, such as President of the Assembly for International Heat Transfer Conferences, President of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), and President of the International Centre for Heat and Mass Transfer (ICHMT). He served as an honorary member of the Associazione Termotecnica Italiana (2006) and as the chairman of the honorary editorial advisory board for the International Journal of Heat and Mass Transfer and the International Communications in Heat and Mass Transfer for several years.

Professor Goldstein's honours and recognitions include honorary doctoral degrees, visiting professorships, fellowships/memberships in prestigious professional and honorary societies, and honorary editorial advisory board memberships in esteemed journals. His distinguished contributions to the field of heat transfer were recognized through many prestigious awards such as the ASME Heat Transfer Memorial Award (1978), the AIChE/ASME Max Jakob Memorial Award (1990), the ICHMT Luikov Medal (1990), the Nusselt–Reynolds Prize (1993), the ICHMT Fellowship Award (2004), and the ASME Medal (2006). He was also bestowed fellowships in reputed societies such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1986), the American Physical Society (1989), the American Society for Engineering Education (1997), the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (1999), and the Royal Academy of Engineering (1999). He was a member of the United States National Academy of Engineering (1985), the National Academy of Engineering—Mexico (1991), the European Academy of Science and Arts (2016), and the Pan American Academy of Engineering (2019). In recognition of his pioneering contributions to the field of energy, the ASME established the Richard J. Goldstein Energy Lecture Award in 2019. More recently, the ICHMT established the ICHMT Hewitt–Goldstein Young Investigator Award in recognition of Geoff F. Hewitt and Richard J. Goldstein, pioneering members of the ICHMT and outstanding leaders in the field of heat transfer and energy.

Professor Goldstein's most important contributions do not come with awards or medals, but are felt in the hearts of the many students, young faculty members, colleagues, and other acquaintances whom he mentored and otherwise influenced through their careers. Though often stated to him throughout his career, many written and spoken heartfelt comments of appreciation were presented in 2018 at a celebration of his 90th birthday.

Professor Goldstein was a major leader in the international heat and mass transfer and energy engineering communities for many years. His passion for scholarship and engineering, leadership, guidance, and support for his friends, colleagues and students, and never-ending enthusiasm and kindness will be greatly missed by scientists and engineers around the world.

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We offer our deepest condolences.

Umesh Madanan
Kanpur, India

Wojciech Lipiński
Grójec, Poland

Terrence W. Simon
Minneapolis, USA

Alptekin Aksan
Minneapolis, USA

Faruk Arinç,
Ankara, Türkiye,

Yildiz Bayazitoglu
Houston, USA

John Bischof
Minneapolis, USA

Jaime Cervantes
Mexico City, Mexico

Ping Cheng
Shanghai, China

Pedro J.M. Coelho
Lisbon, Portugal

Renato M. Cotta
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Maurizio Cumo
Rome, Italy

Jane H. Davidson
Minneapolis, USA

Siaka Dembele
London, UK

Paolo Di Marco
Pisa, Italy

Leonid A. Dombrovsky
Moscow, Russia

Ivan V. Egorov
Moscow, Russia

Tim Fisher
Los Angeles, USA

L.S. "Skip" Fletcher
College Station, USA

Steven Girshick
Oakland, USA

Costas Grigolopoulos
Berkeley, USA

Ulrich Gross
Freiberg, Germany

Kemal Hanjalić
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Delft, The Netherlands

Abel Hernandez-Guerrero
Salamanca, Mexico

John R. Howell
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St Petersburg, Russia

Yogesh Jaluria
Piscataway, USA

Artem Khalatov
Kyiv, Ukraine

Thomas Kuehn
Minneapolis, USA

Francis A. Kulacki
Minneapolis, USA

Denis Lemonnier
Poitiers, France

Raj M. Manglik
Cincinnati, USA

Shigenao Maruyama
Hachinohe, Japan

M. Pinar Mengüç
Istanbul, Türkiye

Josua P. Meyer
Stellenbosch, South Africa

Wally J. Minkowycz
Chicago, USA

Michael F. Modest
Aptos, USA

Abdulmajeed Mohamad
Calgary, Canada

Andrzej Nowak
Gliwice, Poland

Helcio Orlande
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Jacques Padet
Reims, France

Suhas Patankar
Minneapolis, USA

David Y.H. Pui
Minneapolis, USA

James Ramsey
Louisville, USA

Yelena Shafeyeva
Redding, USA

Evgueni M. Smirnov
Saint Petersburg, Russia

Vinod Srinivasan
Minneapolis, USA

Aldo Steinfeld
Zurich, Switzerland

Peter Stephan
Darmstadt, Germany

Janusz Szmyd
Kraków, Poland

Kumar K. Tamma
Minneapolis, USA

Wen-Quan Tao
Xi'an, China

Ilker Tari
Ankara, Türkiye

John Thome
Lausanne, Switzerland

Victoria Timchenko
Sydney, Australia

Leonard L. Vasiliev
Minsk, Belarus

Qiuwang Wang
Xi'an, China

Brent W. Webb
Provo, USA

William Worek
Chicago, USA

Hideo Yoshida
Kyoto, Japan

Xing Zhang
Beijing, China

Tianshou Zhao
Shenzhen, China

Gennady Ziskind
Be'er Sheva, Israel

Umesh Madanan^{a,*}, Wojciech Lipiński^{b,*}, Terrence W. Simon^{c,*},
Alptekin Aksan^c, Faruk Arinç^d, Yildiz Bayazitoglu^e, John Bischof^f,
Jaime Cervantes^f, Ping Cheng^g, Pedro J.M. Coelho^h, Renato M. Cottaⁱ,
Maurizio Cumo^j, Jane H. Davidson^c, Siaka Dembele^k, Paolo Di Marco^l,
Leonid A. Dombrovsky^m, Ivan V. Egorovⁿ, Tim Fisher^o, L.S.
“Skip” Fletcher^p, Steven Girshick^c, Costas Grigoropoulos^q,
Ulrich Gross^r, Kemal Hanjalic^{s,t}, Abel Hernandez-Guerrero^u, John
R. Howell^v, Sergey Isaev^w, Yogesh Jaluria^x, Artem Khalatov^y,
Thomas Kuehn^c, Francis A. Kulacki^c, Denis Lemonnier^z, Raj
M. Manglik^{aa}, Shigenao Maruyama^{ab}, M. Pinar Mengüç^{ac}, Josua
P. Meyer^{ad}, Wally J. Minkowycz^{ae}, Michael F. Modest^{af},
Abdulmajeed Mohamad^{ag}, Andrzej Nowak^{ah}, Helcio Orlande^{ai},
Jacques Padet^{aj}, Suhas Patankar^c, David Y.H. Pui^c, James Ramsey^c,
Yelena Shafeyeva^{ak}, Evgueni M. Smirnov^{al}, Vinod Srinivasan^c,
Aldo Steinfeld^{am}, Peter Stephan^{an}, Janusz Szmyd^{ao}, Kumar K. Tamma^c,
Wen-Quan Tao^{ap}, Ilker Tari^{aq}, John Thome^{ar}, Victoria Timchenko^{as},
Leonard L. Vasiliev^{at}, Qiuwang Wang^{ap}, Brent W. Webb^{au},
William Worek^{av}, Hideo Yoshida^{aw}, Xing Zhang^{ax}, Tianshou Zhao^{ay},
Gennady Ziskind^{az}

^a Department of Mechanical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology
Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, 208016, India

^b Polna 1a, 05-600, Grójec, Poland

^c Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Minnesota, 111
Church Street SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455, USA

^d Department of Mechanical Engineering, Middle East Technical University,
06800, Çankaya, Ankara, Türkiye

^e Department of Mechanical Engineering, Rice University, 6100 Main
Houston, TX, 77005-1892, USA

^f School of Engineering, National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico
City, 09230, Mexico

^g School of Mechanical Engineering, Shanghai Jiao Tong University,
Shanghai, 200240, China

^h Department of Mechanical Engineering, Instituto Superior Técnico,
Universidade de Lisboa, Av. Rovisco Pais, 1049-001, Lisboa, Portugal

ⁱ Mechanical Engineering Department, POLI & COPPE, Universidade
Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Cx. Postal 68503, Cidade Universitária, Rio de
Janeiro, RJ, 21945-970, Brazil

^j University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’, Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 244, Rome,
Italy

^k Department of Mechanical Engineering, Kingston University, London,
SW15 3DW, United Kingdom

^l DESTEC, University of Pisa, Largo L. Lazzarino 1, 56122, Pisa, Italy

^m Heat Transfer Department, Joint Institute for High Temperatures,
Krasnokazarmennaya 17A, NCHMT, 111116, Moscow, Russia

ⁿ Department of Aeromechanics and Flight Engineering, Moscow Institute of
Physics and Technology, Dolgoprudnyi, Moscow oblast, 141700, Russia

^o Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, University of
California Los Angeles, 420 Westwood Plaza 38-137E Eng IV, Los Angeles,
CA, 90095-1597, USA

^p Department of Mechanical Engineering, Texas A&M University, College
Station, TX, 77843-3123, USA

^q Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of California, 6129
Etcheverry Hall, Berkeley, CA, 94720-1740, USA

^r Institute of Thermal Engineering, TU Bergakademie Freiberg, Gustav-
Zeuner-Str. 7, 09599, Freiberg, Germany

^s Faculty of Applied Sciences, Delft University of Technology, Delft,
2629 HZ, The Netherlands

^t University of Sarajevo, Obala Kulina Bana 7, Sarajevo, Bosnia and
Herzegovina

^u Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Guanajuato,
Salamanca, 36700, Mexico

^v Walker Department of Mechanical Engineering (retired), The University of
Texas, Austin, TX, 78712, USA

^w Department of Engineering and Design, Saint-Petersburg State Marine
Technical University, Saint-Petersburg, 190121, Russia

- ^x Department of Mechanical Engineering, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Piscataway, NJ, 08854, USA
- ^y Institute for Engineering Thermal Physics, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2A Marii Kapnist Str., Kiev, 03057, Ukraine
- ^z Institut PPRIME UPR CNRS 3346 - CNRS ISAE-ENSMA, Université de Poitiers, ENSMA, Téléport 2, 1 Avenue Clément ADER, BP 40109, F-86961, Futuroscope Chasseneuil CEDEX, France
- ^{aa} Thermal-Fluids and Thermal Processing Laboratory, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, 45221-0072, USA
- ^{ab} National Institute of Technology, Hachinohe College, Hachinohe, Aomori, 039-1192, Japan
- ^{ac} Center for Energy, Environment and Economy (CEEE), Ozyegin University, 34794, Istanbul, Çekmekoy, Türkiye
- ^{ad} Department of Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, 7599, South Africa
- ^{ae} Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, University of Illinois, Chicago, IL, 60607, USA
- ^{af} School of Engineering, University of California, Merced, CA, 95343, USA
- ^{ag} Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, T2N 1N4, Canada
- ^{ah} Department of Thermal Technology, Silesian University of Technology, Konarskiego 22, 44-100, Gliwice, Poland
- ^{ai} Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 21941-901, Brazil
- ^{aj} Université de Reims, GRESPI—Thermomécanique, Faculté des Sciences, B.P. 1039, 51687, Reims, France
- ^{ak} Begell House Inc., Redding, CT, 06810, United States
- ^{al} Department of Fluid Dynamics, Combustion and Heat Transfer, Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, 29 Politechnicheskaya St., St. Petersburg, 195251, Russia
- ^{am} Department of Mechanical and Process Engineering, ETH Zurich, 8092, Zurich, Switzerland
- ^{an} Institute for Technical Thermodynamics, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Darmstadt, 64287, Germany
- ^{ao} Department of Fundamental Research in Energy Engineering, AGH University of Kraków, 30-059, Kraków, Poland
- ^{ap} Key Laboratory of Thermal-Fluid Science and Engineering, MOE, Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xi'an, 710049, Shaanxi, China
- ^{aq} International Centre for Heat and Mass Transfer, Department of Mechanical Engineering E-104, Middle East Technical University, 06800 Ankara, Türkiye
- ^{ar} JJ Cooling Innovation Sàrl, 1015, Lausanne, Switzerland
- ^{as} School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, 2052, Australia
- ^{at} Porous Media Laboratory, A.V. Luikov Heat and Mass Transfer Institute, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 15 P. Brovka Str., Minsk, 220072, Belarus
- ^{au} Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, USA
- ^{av} Argonne National Laboratory, 9700 S Cass Ave, Lemont, IL, 60439, USA
- ^{aw} Kyoto University, Kyoto, 606-8501, Japan
- ^{ax} Institute of Engineering Thermophysics, Department of Engineering Mechanics, Tsinghua University, Beijing, 100084, China
- ^{ay} Department of Mechanical and Energy Engineering, South University of Science and Technology, Shenzhen, China
- ^{az} Department of Mechanical Engineering, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Be'er Sheva, 8410501, Israel
- * Corresponding authors.
E-mail addresses: umadanan@iitk.ac.in (U. Madanan), wsl@member.fsf.org (W. Lipiński), simon002@umn.edu (T.W. Simon).