

Obituary



Irina Evgen'evna Kuzmina (1937–2018)

Irina Evgen'evna Kuzmina passed away in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on November 10, 2018, at the age of 81. She was a well-known scientist and a wonderful person.

From the very childhood, Irina Evgen'evna was involved in zoology. She was born in Pavlovsk, Russia, on April 7, 1937. Her father was an engineer, mother – physician. During the Second World War the family was evacuated in Ulyanovsk Province, and in 1945 come back and settled in Pushkin, Leningrad Province.

Irina Evgen'evna graduated from secondary school in 1954 and entered the Biology faculty of the Leningrad State University (now – Saint Petersburg State University). She actively participated in the student community life heading the student group. Having successfully graduated from the Department of Vertebrate Zoology in 1959, she starts to work as a technician in the Zoological Institute of USSR Academy of Sciences.

Her supervisor in the Department of Vertebrates became outstanding Soviet paleontologist Prof. Nikolai K. Vereshchagin. From 1959 until 1963 Irina Evgen'evna disassembles and put in order extensive paleontological collections from archeological excavations on the Don River (locality Kostenki) and caves of the Northern Urals. In November 1963 she entered the postgraduate course at the Zoological Institute of USSR Academy of Sciences. The theme of her dissertation was “The formation of theriofauna of the Northern Urals in the Late Anthropogene”. She got the scientific degree of

Candidate of Biological Sciences by the decision of the Scientific Council of the Zoological Institute on January 17, 1968, and was enlisted on the staff of the Laboratory of Vertebrates as a junior scientific researcher.

She was announced thanks by the Director of the Institute, Academician B.E. Bykhovskii already in autumn of the same year for the fulfillment of large and complicated works on transportation and sheltering of collections of the Osteology Department in connection with the repairing of the storage.

In the 1970-s Irina E. Kuzmina was involved in intensive field works and expeditions on collecting fossil paleontological material in Perm Province and Yakutia. In addition to that, she actively participated in the public life of the Institute: she was an agitator, Komsomol leader, cultural organizer, vice-chairman of the local committee. All who knew Irina Evgen'evna noted that she was a gentle, attentive, responsive person with a good sense of humor.

In 1974 I.E. Kuzmina gave birth to Sofia Alexandrovna. Delivery of daughter became a significant event in her life. She harmonically combined upbringing of a daughter with work. Irina Evgen'evna becomes a scientific secretary of the Committee on mammoths and mammoth fauna investigation in 1975, and in 1978 she became a head of the Osteology Department of the Laboratory of Mammalogy in the Zoological Institute of USSR Academy of Sciences. She participated in the preparation and

performance of the exhibitions “World of a mammoth” in 1981, 1985 and 1987 in Japan and Finland.

It should be noted that her attitude towards young researchers was distinguished by sincerity, kindness, and maternal care. In 1986 she gets the position of scientific researcher and in 1987 – the senior scientific researcher. In 1980th and 1990th I.E. Kuzmina actively cooperates with archaeologists. She identified osteological material from the archaeological sites of different epochs. Thanks to her efforts the scientific collections of the Institute were supplemented by unique fossil material from the sites Kostenki, Yudinovo, Serteya, Varfolomeevskaya, caves of the Urals and other sites.

At the beginning of the 1980s, I.E. Kuzmina was involved into long-lasting study devoted to issues of systematics and morphology of equids which ended by publication of scientific monograph “The Horses of Northern Eurasia from the Pliocene to Recent” (1997). Irina Evgen'evna as co-editor prepared for publication 16 volumes with collective papers in the Trudy Zoologicheskogo Instituta (Proceedings of the Zoological Institute). She published more than 80 scientific papers with the results of her works. It should be noted that Irina Evgen'evna has worked in the Zoological Institute for 42 years – more than half of her life. She raised remarkable granddaughter and grandson.

The bright memory of Irina Evgen'evna will forever remain in our hearts.

Mikhail V. Sablin

Lists of publications by Dr. Irina E. Kuzmina

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