In memoriam Antonio Nuñez Jimenez

It is a great loss not only for Cuban science, but also for the whole scientific world that Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Antonio Nuñez Jimenez passed away in 1998. The scientific community has lost in him a well-known scientist who spent many years in active research and participated in many expeditions all over the world. His product includes several books, many papers, and the foundation of various scientific societies and organisations in Cuba.

Born in 1923, Jimenez studied in La Habana, Cuba, and in 1954 he published the first issue of his Geography of Cuba, while he received his Doctor of Philosophy and Letters at the University in La Habana in 1951. During the following years and in connection with Cuba's development, Jimenez continued his scientific activity depending on the actual situation in his country. Later he became the founding president of the Academy of Sciences of Cuba (Academia Ciencias de la Cuba, 1959–1962). At this time, he also became a member of the editorial board of Gerlands Beiträge zur Geophysik during the editorship of Professor Hans Ertel, the well-known geophysicist. In the framework of the connection between the German Academy of Sciences in Berlin and the developing seismological activity in Cuba, members of the staff of the German Academy visited Cuba from time to time, installing instruments of a seismological network. Professor Jimenez was deeply interested in this type of geophysical research and stimulated the development and history of geophysics and all related disciplines. He was also passionate about the work of Alexander von Humboldt, the famous German scientist. Following a ceremony at the German Academy in Berlin in 1959, he published a most interesting paper on Humboldt's visit in Cuba in the Festschrift for Alexander Humboldt. Professor Jimenez had a broad interest and was a creative scientist in many fields, e.g. he was founding president of the Foundation Man and Nature, president of the Cuban Geographical Society, founding president of the Latin American and Caribbean Speleological Society and member of many scientific societies all over the world. He carried out speleological and carstological studies in several countries and also historical studies both in Cuba and in Latin America. He enjoyed travelling for science and carrying out expeditions and research on the spot. He participated in the exploration of the North Pole, the Antarctica, as well as the Andes from Peru to Venezuela. One of his pioneering acts was to lead the trip "In a Canoe from the Amazonas to the Caribbean" during which he visited twenty countries in the Amazonas, Orinoco and Caribbean Basins. In this respect he was a successful successor of Alexander von Humboldt.

Among his publications in form of scientific books and papers, the best known are his Geography of Cuba (3 volumes) and Geology, which includes much history.

Professor Antonio Nuñez Jimenez greatly contributed to science in Cuba, as well as the Cuban Academy of Science and international scientific co-operation. He was an excellent scientist, a noble man and a wonderful friend. The scientific community will miss him all over the world, but he will live on in our hearts and in his well-known books and scientific products. We will always remember our amigo Antonio Nuñez Jimenez!

Wilfried Schröder (Bremen)