On 27 September 2023, Volodymyr Mykhailovych Kopchak, Head of the Department of Pancreas and Bile Duct Surgery at the Shalimov National Institute of Surgery and Transplantation of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine, winner of the State Prize of Ukraine, Honoured Doctor of Ukraine, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor, turned 70 years old.

V. M. Kopchak was born in Stanislav (now Ivano–Frankivsk) in the family of medical students. After graduation, Volodymyr's parents moved to Rozhnyativ, Ivano–Frankivsk Oblast, and began working at the Rozhnyativ District Hospital: his father, Mykhailo Ivanovych, as chief physician and head of the surgical department, and his mother, Ivanna Volodymyrivna, as head of the infectious diseases department. In addition to Volodymyr, the Kopchak family had another son, also a future surgeon, Oleksandr. The parents invested the best they had in their sons, raising them to be honest, decent, hardworking and dedicated people.

Volodymyr Kopchak's childhood was spent on the territory of the hospital where his parents worked. When he was little, he played with his brother in the hospital yard, and when he grew up, he started helping his parents. Volodymyr dreamed of being a captain and planned to enter the Maritime Academy. However, he was rejected by the academy's medical board. Inspired by his parents' example, he entered the Ivano–Frankivsk Medical Institute and graduated in 1976, gaining a solid knowledge that became the foundation for his future career as a surgeon, and was sent to work in Chernihiv Oblast. But one chance meeting changed his seemingly predetermined professional and life path forever. At that time, the prominent Ukrainian surgeon O. O. Shalimov was recruiting young specialists for the newly built and opened in 1972 Kyiv Research Institute of Clinical and Experimental Surgery. By the will of fate, O. O. Shalimov came to Rozhnyativ, Ivano–Frankivsk region, where he met a young medical graduate who, before leaving for his job on assignment, had helped his
father in treating patients and under whose guidance he had undergone a serious practical school. Oleksandr Oleksiyovych took notice of the promising young surgeon and invited him to join the newly established institute, something he had never dreamed of.

In 1976, Volodymyr Kopchak began his internship at the Kyiv Research Institute of Clinical and Experimental Surgery of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, headed by O. O. Shalimov (since 2008 – O. O. Shalimov National Institute of Surgery and Transplantation of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine). At this strongest practical surgical school in the country, Volodymyr Mykhailovych proved to be a responsible, hardworking, sensitive, decent, selfless surgeon who showed great promise, and Oleksandr Oleksiyovych Shalimov kept him working at the institute, opening up the prospect of great professional growth. Volodymyr Mykhailovych will always remember the hours spent in the operating room with Alexander Alekseevich, it was an invaluable unique experience.

During the three years of his work at the Institute, V. M. Kopchak rose from a resident to a researcher. In 1980, he defended his PhD thesis on "Diagnosis and Surgical Treatment of Abdominal Ischaemic Syndrome" and has remained an unsurpassed expert in the treatment of this pathology. As a talented young surgeon, in 1985 he was appointed a senior researcher at the Department of Liver, Bile Duct and Pancreas Surgery. Enriched by the surgical experience of Oleksandr Oleksiyovych and Serhii Oleksandrovich Shalimov; Vladimir Mykhailovych performed operations on the pancreas, bile ducts, and liver flawlessly. He developed many new techniques for surgical interventions on damaged bile ducts, which prevented multiple reoperations and improved the results of treatment of such patients. These achievements formed the basis of his doctoral thesis on "Diagnosis and Surgical Treatment of Biliary Fistulae", which he successfully defended in 1994.

Years of dedicated work, the results of many studies contributed to the growth of V. M. Kopchak's authority as a talented scientist, clinician and highly qualified surgeon.

In 1997, Volodymyr Kopchak was awarded the title of Honoured Doctor of Ukraine for his conscientious and fruitful work, achievements and inventions, and in 1998 he became the Head of the Department of Pancreatic Surgery and Reconstructive Bile Duct Surgery at the Kyiv Research Institute of Clinical and Experimental Surgery. In 1999, V. M. Kopchak was awarded the title of Professor. In 2005, he was awarded the State Prize of Ukraine in Science and Technology for his scientific achievements in purulent–septic pancreatic surgery.

For 25 years, V. M. Kopchak has been working as the head of the department, creating the same bright, favourable atmosphere that used to prevail under O. O. Shalimov, inspiring all employees with new ideas, giving them joy and happiness of scientific development and a full professional life. As a worthy successor of his teacher, he has become a leader and mentor for all the staff of the department, and they see him as a father and a friend to whom they can turn with any question, any problem and get help, wise advice, and

a kind, encouraging word. I want to learn from Volodymyr Mykhailovych every day, every hour, every minute, to memorise his every move in the operating room, every word he says. He awakens in every surgeon a thirst for scientific inventions and new achievements, a desire to work, create, achieve, win in order to save lives and improve patient outcomes. No matter what, you work selflessly and conscientiously, believe in patients and help them. These words belong to Volodymyr Mykhailovych and are the motto of his professional life, in which helping patients has always been and remains his first priority.

Professor Kopchak's scientific achievements include more than 460 scientific papers, 48 copyright certificates for inventions, and 7 monographs. He has trained 5 Doctors and 7 Candidates of Medical Sciences, who joined the scientific community of Ukrainian surgery as capable and talented specialists.

Volodymyr Mykhailovych is constantly deepening his knowledge by keeping in touch with international colleagues, looking for new opportunities to improve the results of treatment of patients with diseases of the pancreas and pancreaticoduodenal area. Thanks to the daily titanic work in the operating room, scientific achievements and communication with such world leaders in pancreatic surgery as Hans Beger (Germany), Claudio Basi (Italy), Markus Büchler (Germany), the results of treatment of patients with malignant and benign tumours of the pancreas and pancreaticoduodenal area at the Institute's clinic are comparable to the results of treatment of this category of patients in the world's leading clinics. Saving and prolonging patients' lives is the goal of Volodymyr Mykhailovych's life. He has earned international recognition, respect and honour for this.

In his creative work, Professor Kopchak is distinguished by great energy and constant striving for the new, for improvement of methods of diagnostics and surgical treatment of diseases, improvement of its immediate and long–term results. The development of hepatopancreatobilary surgery has always been a leading area of his work. Continuing the work of his teachers, V. M. Kopchak made a worthy contribution to the development of reconstructive bile duct surgery and pancreatic surgery. Volodymyr Mykhailovych has developed and implemented new methods of surgical interventions for tumours of the pancreas and pancreaticoduodenal area, he widely uses modern methods of vascular reconstruction and lymphadenectomy, which contributes to a significant improvement in the short–term and long–term results of treatment of this category of seriously ill patients. Under the leadership of V. M. Kopchak, the department he heads was the first in Ukraine to perform laparoscopic cystojejunostomy, distal pancreatic resection
and pancreaticoduodenal resection with a significant improvement in the immediate results of treatment of patients.

Volodymyr Mykhailovych created a school of like-minded people consisting of active scientists and professional surgeons, and he and his students developed priority areas in pancreatic and biliary surgery.

Volodymyr Mikhailovych is a talented multi-faceted person who uniquely combines the best human qualities with high professionalism, dedication and incredible humanity. Over the years of his professional life, he has saved thousands of patients. Possessing a filigree technique, Volodymyr Mykhailovych performs extremely complex operations every day, giving patients the joy of life. At the same time, he is a modest and decent person who has incredible strength of mind and a delicate and sensitive soul.

Volodymyr Mykhailovych inspires everyone around him. He is a surgeon with golden hands and a big, kind and sincere heart. For decades, he has been receiving sincere respect and love from his employees, colleagues, students and patients for his impeccable work.

V. M. Kopchak celebrates his anniversary with a large reserve of energy and creative plans, being on the path of constant search for new and daily improvement, actively continuing his surgical activity and doing everything possible and impossible to save the lives of patients.

Colleagues and students sincerely congratulate
Volodymyr Mykhailovych on his anniversary
and wish him good health, inexhaustible energy, inspiration, creative success, new achievements, realisation of all his ideas and plans, long years of active professional life and only victories!

The editorial staff of the Ukrainian Journal of Clinical Surgery joins all the sincere wishes of the jubilee and cherishes the hope for further long-term cooperation to equip the surgical community with new achievements in the treatment of serious diseases so that patients can be happy to live.