

PREFACE

This special issue is dedicated to Tran Duc Van on the occasion of his 60th birthday. Trần Đức Vân is a former director of the Institute of Mathematics, Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology, and a longtime editor of *Acta Mathematica Vietnamica*.

Tran Duc Van was born on April 27th 1951 in Quang Tri, Vietnam. He was one of the best Vietnamese students during the Vietnamese-American War and was sent to the USSR for higher education. He obtained the degree Candidate of Science (the equivalent of a Ph.D.) from Belarusian State University in 1977. In 1980 he obtained the degree Doctor of Science from Novosibirsk Institute of Mathematics. Upon returning home, he joined the Institute of Mathematics in 1981, and he was assigned the task of building up the Department of Partial Differential Equations. Within less than ten years, the department had become one of the best research units of the institute. He was promoted to associate professor in 1983 and to full professor in 1991. In 1990, he was appointed Deputy Director and in 1995 Director of the Institute of Mathematics. Thanks to his efforts the institute was able to overcome the difficulties of the beginning period of economic reforms in Vietnam, and became one of the leading research institutes in the country.

At the beginning of 1997, Tran Duc Van was stricken by a serious illness. Nevertheless, he continued to carry out administrative work and doing research. Due to the worsening of his health condition, he resigned from his duty as the director of the institute in 2001. However, he still kept doing research, writing textbooks and supervising Ph.D. students until he became completely paralyzed. He has contributed much to the development of the theory of partial differential equations of infinite order. He has produced more than 80 research articles, 6 monographs and has supervised 10 PhD students. He has served as an editor of *Acta Mathematica Vietnamica* from 1984 to 2007. For his courage and achievement Tran Duc Van received great admiration from the scientific community of Vietnam.

On July 16, 2011, while this issue was in press, Tran Duc Van passed away. We shall always remember him as a prominent mathematician and a dedicated scientific administrator of Vietnam.