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Physical education as a vocation: on the 88th birthday of Viktor Alekseevich Mirnichenko

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ABSTRACT

The article is dedicated to Viktor Alekseevich Mirnichenko, the oldest employee of St. Petersburg State Pediatric University (SPbSPMU), a teacher at the Department of Physical Education. On September 13, 2025, he will be 88 years old and 60 years of his teaching career. Viktor Alekseevich served in the special forces in Turkmenistan, where great attention was paid to physical training. He graduated from the Bashkir College of Physical Education and the Lesgaft Institute of Physical Culture with a degree in Athletics Coach. He started working at Spartak, then at the Leningrad Sanitary and Hygienic Medical Institute (LSGMI) (1966–1968, 1971–1976), and in 1968–1971 served as an instructor of physical therapy in the Northern Group of Forces (Poland). Viktor Alekseevich Mirnichenko is a candidate for the Master of Sports in athletics, coach, organizer of sports events, instructor in physical therapy, mentor of famous medical workers and teachers, holder of the badge “Excellent Student of physical Culture and Sports”, honorary title “Veteran of Labor”. He has received commendations from the Committee on Physical Culture and Sports (2022) and the university administration for his professional activities. As an experienced teacher, he actively uses modern approaches to conduct practical classes, pays special attention to students with health problems. In parallel with his teaching activities, he is a research supervisor: he prepares students for participation in Student scientific and practical conferences and helps them publish scientific papers. Viktor Alekseevich is the organizer of sports sections, trains and prepares students for interuniversity athletics competitions. The success of his coaching work is confirmed by the students — participants and winners of athletics competitions.

Keywords: senior lecturer V.A. Mirnichenko, Saint Petersburg State Pediatric Medical University, sports achievements, athletes' training, teaching activities, famous students, awards

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Физическая культура как призвание: к 88-летию Виктора Алексеевича Мирниченко

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Статья посвящена Виктору Алексеевичу Мирниченко — старейшему работнику Санкт-Петербургского государственного педиатрического университета (СПбГПМУ), преподавателю кафедры физической культуры. 13 сентября 2025 года ему исполнилось 88 лет, 60 лет из которых он отдал педагогической деятельности. Виктор Алексеевич служил в войсках особого назначения в Туркменистане, где большое внимание уделялось физической подготовке. Окончил Башкирский техникум физкультуры и Институт физической культуры им. П.Ф. Лесгафта по специальности «Тренер по легкой атлетике». Профессиональную карьеру начал в спортивном обществе «Спартак», затем продолжил в Ленинградском санитарно-гигиеническом медицинском институте (ЛСГМИ) (1966–1968, 1971–1976 годы), а с 1968 по 1971 годы служил инструктором лечебной физической культуры в Северной группе войск (Польша).

Виктор Алексеевич Мирниченко — кандидат в мастера спорта по легкой атлетике, тренер, организатор спортивных мероприятий, инструктор по лечебной физкультуре, наставник заслуженных медицинских работников и педагогов, обладатель нагрудного знака «Отличник физической культуры и спорта», почетного звания «Ветеран труда». Имеет благодарности от Комитета по физической культуре и спорту (2022) и руководства Университета за профессиональную деятельность. Как опытный педагог он активно использует современные подходы для проведения практических занятий, уделяет особое внимание студентам, имеющим проблемы со здоровьем. Параллельно с педагогической деятельностью он является научным руководителем: готовит студентов к участию в студенческих научно-практических конференциях и помогает им в публикации исследовательских работ. Виктор Алексеевич является организатором спортивных секций, тренирует и готовит студентов к межвузовским соревнованиям по легкой атлетике. Успех его тренерской работы подтверждают воспитанники — победители и призеры легкоатлетических соревнований.

Ключевые слова: старший преподаватель В.А. Мирниченко, Санкт-Петербургский государственный педиатрический медицинский университет, спортивные достижения, подготовка спортсменов, педагогическая деятельность, знаменитые ученики, награды

Как цитировать

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Viktor Alekseevich Mirnichenko was born in 1937 in the Poltava region. His childhood coincided with a turbulent period in the country's history — the years of the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945). From 1941 to 1943, during the occupation of the Poltava region, his family found themselves in a combat zone. Recalling those events, Viktor Alekseevich has repeatedly noted that he and his relatives survived miraculously.

He received his secondary education after the war. His engagement with athletics during his school years laid the groundwork for his future sporting achievements. A two-year military service in special forces units at the Kushka base (Turkmenistan) became a formative stage where physical training was integrated with combat training, shaping his approach to sport as a discipline combining endurance and applied skill.

In 1961, V.A. Mirnichenko graduated from the Bashkir College of Physical Education in Ufa and from 1961 to 1965 continued his studies at the Leningrad State Institute of Physical Culture named after P.F. Lesgaft, earning a degree as a

track and field athletics coach. His coaching career began at the Spartak sports society, where he combined teaching with active participation in competitions. He later worked in the Department of Physical Education at the Leningrad Sanitary and Hygienic Medical Institute (LSGMI) from 1966 to 1968.

From 1968 to 1971, V.A. Mirnichenko served in the Northern Group of Forces (Poland) as a therapeutic physical training instructor. This experience allowed him to deepen his knowledge of rehabilitation programs through sport. After returning to the LSGMI (1971–1976), he continued developing methods for restoring physical health through systematic training.

Viktor Alekseevich devoted 48 years of his teaching career to the Saint Petersburg State Pediatric Medical University (SPbSPMU), working there from 1977 onward (Fig. 1). As an athlete and an experienced teacher in the field of physical education, he fostered students' interest in sports and an active lifestyle, participated in numerous sporting events, and became a respected leader and friend to each new group of students.

Throughout his teaching career, V.A. Mirnichenko has been a professional in the field of physical culture and remains actively engaged in research. With his participation, control standards and tests for assessing the students' level of physical fitness are developed and adjusted [3]. Viktor Alekseevich is the author of scientific papers and methodological manuals [2, 4, 5]. For many years, under the guidance of V.A. Mirnichenko, students have been actively participating in the University's scientific and practical conferences, where they win prizes.

Sport has always played an important role in Viktor Alekseevich's life, as evidenced by his coaching achievements. These include training students who were members of teams at various levels. For over 20 years, the track and field team led by V.A. Mirnichenko participated in All-Union competitions among universities and those organized by the Ministry of Health of the USSR and, later, the Russian Federation. As a result of his coaching work, 8 individuals achieved the Candidate for Master of Sports standard (a high national sports qualification), and 45 received the first sports category. His notable students include Ksenia Vasko, a multiple champion in combined events and a member of the SPbSPMU track and field team, who competed in inter-university competitions and sports festivals for Russian medical universities; V.P. Svyatogor, who was listed among the country's top 25 runners in the 1500 meters in 1980; and Elena Khudyakova, a participant in the 1980 "Pushkin–Leningrad" marathon.

In 1982, Viktor Alekseevich was one of the organizers of the first mass All-Union cross-country ski event "Ski Track of Russia" and participated in it as an athlete. The competitions were held at the sports base in Pargolovo (Leningrad region) (Fig. 2). His participation in the "Pushkin–Leningrad" race remains in Viktor



Fig. 1. Viktor Alekseevich Mirnichenko — Senior Lecturer at the Department of Physical Education, Saint Petersburg State Pediatric Medical University, since 1977

Рис. 1. Виктор Алексеевич Мирниченко — старший преподаватель кафедры физической культуры СПбГПМУ с 1977 г.



Fig. 2. All-Union competitions (1982) "Ski Track of Russia" (from left to right): Mirnichenko V.A., Svyatogor V.P., Prokhorov V.N.

Рис. 2. Всесоюзные соревнования (1982) «Лыжня России» (слева направо): Мирниченко В.А., Святогор В.П., Прохоров В.Н.



Fig. 3. Mirnichenko V.A. with LPMI students participating in the "Pushkin — Leningrad" run

Рис. 3. Мирниченко В.А. со студентами ЛПМИ — участниками пробега «Пушкин — Ленинград»

Alekseevich's memory as an exciting sporting event shared with his students from the Leningrad Pediatric Medical Institute (LPMI) (Fig. 3).

Thanks to his extensive teaching experience, Viktor Alekseevich employs original approaches in his classes. By integrating elements of sports games, exercise machines, and various sports equipment into the educational process, he sparks students' interest in physical education, instills practical skills in them, and fosters a drive for sporting achievements.

V.A. Mirnichenko pays special attention to students in the special medical group, ensuring an individual approach during classes. He applies his experience as a therapeutic physical training instructor to organizing sessions for these students, taking their health status into account.

As a physical education teacher, Viktor Alekseevich mentored many students who later became leaders in medical organizations (Fig. 4). Mikhail Dmitrievich Didur specialized in 800–1500 meter running (1977). He is now the Chief Specialist of the Health Committee for Therapeutic Physical Training and Sports Medicine, a Doctor of Medical Sciences, a Professor, and Head of the Institute of the Human Brain at the Russian Academy of Sciences. V.A. Mirnichenko guided Sergei Vladimirovich Matveev (1977–1985) to sporting success. Matveev competed in numerous track and field events and was a member of the team in a match meet in Kaunas (1986). He is currently a Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor, and Head of the Department of Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine at the I.P. Pavlov St. Petersburg State Medical University's Faculty of Postgraduate Education. Vladimir Stanislavovich Vasilenko, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor, and Head of the Department of Hospital Therapy at SPbSPMU, actively participated in track and field competitions (1978–1984) in the Leningrad Pediatric Medical Institute championships. V.A. Mirnichenko prepared Viktor Viktorovich Pogorelchuk for university competitions (1977–1983). Pogorelchuk is now a Candidate of Medical Sciences and an Associate Professor. He combines scientific work with administrative duties as an Assistant to the Rector for Educational Work at SPbSPMU. Andrei Aleksandrovich Antonov was another of V.A. Mirnichenko's students. A member of the "Burevestnik" Voluntary Sports Society track and field team (1977–1982), he has been teaching at the Department of General Hygiene of SPbSPMU since 1983.

It is worth especially noting Viktor Alekseevich's former students: Vasily Ivanovich Orel, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, and Vladimir Nikolaevich Timchenko,



Fig. 4. “Pushkin — Petersburg” run (from left to right): Matveev S.V., Mirnichenko V.A., Didur M.D.

Рис. 4. Пробег «Пушкин — Петербург» (слева направо): Матвеев С.В., Мирниченко В.А., Дидур М.Д.

Dean of the Pediatric Faculty of SPbSPMU and Head of the Department of Pediatric Infectious Diseases. They are always pleased to meet with Viktor Alekseevich and recall their student years with gratitude [1].

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In 2003, Mirnichenko was honored with the “Excellent Practitioner of Physical Culture and Sports” badge. This award served as recognition of his contribution to the development of physical culture and athlete training. Throughout his career, he has also received multiple commendations from the Rector of SPbSPMU for conscientious fulfillment of duties and high professionalism. In recognition of many years of dedicated service, he was conferred the honorary title “Veteran of Labor”.

Viktor Alekseevich Mirnichenko maintains excellent physical fitness to this day. At 88 years of age, he continues his active work at the university, serving as a role model for colleagues and students. We extend our heartfelt wishes for his continued success!

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Вклад авторов. Все авторы внесли существенный вклад в разработку концепции, проведение исследования и подготовку статьи, прочли и одобрили финальную версию перед публикацией.

Конфликт интересов. Авторы декларируют отсутствие явных и потенциальных конфликтов интересов, связанных с публикацией настоящей статьи.

Источник финансирования. Авторы заявляют об отсутствии внешнего финансирования при проведении исследования.

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