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George J. Simitzes was born on 31 July 1932 in Athens, Greece. After receiving his high school diploma, he came to the United States to study engineering. He first attended the University of Tampa (1951–52) and then the Georgia Institute of Technology (1952–56), where he earned the degrees of Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering and Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering. After a few years, he attended Stanford University (1963–65), where he earned a Ph.D. in Aeronautics and Astronautics. His academic career includes teaching and research at Georgia Tech (Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor) in the Schools of Aerospace Engineering and Engineering Science and Mechanics and at the University of Cincinnati (Professor and Department Head of Aerospace Engineering and Engineering Mechanics and Interim Dean of Engineering). He retired in March 2000 from the University of Cincinnati and he is presently Professor Emeritus at both schools.

As a researcher, Professor Simitzes has made pioneering and lasting contributions in the field of Solid and Structural Mechanics. He has written three graduate level text-books and several book chapters. He has authored or coauthored over 160 refereed journal articles in archival engineering journals. He has advised 23 Ph.D. students to completion as well as dozens of M.Sc. students, and he has hosted ten post-doctoral fellows, visiting scholars and faculty from throughout the world during the past three decades. His research publications include works in structural stability, dynamic stability, structural optimization, delamination buckling and growth, analysis of thick composite shells and structural similitude. In his research, he has dealt with beams, bars, plates and shells of various constructions, metallic structures with and without stiffeners, laminated composites, sandwich systems and simple mechanical models.

Professor Simitzes has served and is still serving the scientific and engineering profession through journal editing, organization and participation in professional meetings, membership in professional societal committees and chairing sessions at national and international conferences. He has been invited to deliver Keynote Addresses and Plenary Lectures at several professional meetings. He has also participated in many panels and workshops. He has been a frequent seminar lecturer to many universities and industrial

companies and he has participated in numerous continuing education courses. Professor Simites is the recipient of many awards and honors. He is a Fellow of the AIAA, the ASME, and the American Academy of Mechanics, and an Honorary Member of the Hellenic Society of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics and Member of the International Union of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics. He has also been elected Corresponding Member of the Academy of Athens (the Greek equivalent of the US National Academy of Science). Professor Simites has been married to Nena Athena Economy for 49 years. They have three children, John, William and Alexandra, and six grandchildren, Michael, Christina, George and Matthew Simites, Athena and Marian Zaden, with one more on the way.

We, the guest editors of this volume, have been happy to enjoy collaboration and friendship with Professor Simites. Professor Simites is renowned for his ability to quickly understand and assess a scientific problem. His vision and readiness to share and discuss ideas are admirable. Both of us immensely benefited from joint research and long conversations, in which we would solicit Professor Simites's opinion and advice. Besides our collaboration, it is a real pleasure and honor to associate with Professor Simites. His wisdom, erudition, optimism and sincere personal interest have always been an inspiration to us. We are happy to dedicate this volume to Professor Simites as a modest token of our appreciation, respect and recognition of his lifetime contributions.

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