Vasily Astratov *is an associate professor in the Department of Physics and Optical Science at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte. He received his M.S. from the St. Petersburg State University, Russia, in 1981, and received his Ph.D. degree from the A.F. Ioffe Physical-Technical Institute, St. Petersburg, in 1986. In 1993-1997 he headed a research group at the Ioffe Institute where he pioneered studies of synthetic opals as new three-dimensional photonic crystal structures, the work which directly resulted in a quest for high contrast opals with a complete photonic band gap. In 1996 he was awarded a grant of Royal Society that enabled his visit to the University of Sheffield, U.K. In 1997-2001 he worked as a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Sheffield where he developed novel surface coupling techniques for studying photonic crystal waveguides, and was engaged in the studies of semiconductor microcavities.*

He has been an assistant professor from 2002 to 2007 in the Department of Physics and Optical Science at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, where he is now an associate professor. His current research aims at studying optical properties of novel mesoscopic structures and materials formed by coupled ultra high-Q cavities. He is a topical editor for the journal Optics Express since 2005. In 2007 he organized and edited a Focus Issue of Optics Express devoted to Physics and Applications of Microresonators. He was one of the hosts and a main organizer of the CRI workshop on Physics of Microresonators in 2007. He has served as a technical committee member for CLEO/QELS 2006-07, Special session on Microresonators and Photonic Molecules at ICTON 07, and OECC/ ACOFT 08. He has been a member of the international DFG panel on photonic crystals in Germany. He is a recipient of a number of awards including Senior Visiting EPSRC Fellow Award in the UK in 2006, Award of the Exchange Program adopted between Royal Society and Russian Academy of Sciences in 1996, and the Award in the Annual Competition from A.F. Ioffe Physical-Technical Institute in 1985. He is a member of OSA and SPIE.