



EUROPEAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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Press Release

For immediate release

First EAS “Lodewijk Woltjer Lecture”

The Council of the European Astronomical Society¹ (EAS) has the pleasure to announce the creation of a new award: the “Lodewijk Woltjer Lecture”.

With this award the EAS honours astronomers of outstanding scientific distinction, inviting them to present the “Lodewijk Woltjer Lecture” usually to be given at the EAS's annual ‘European Week of Astronomy and Space Science (JENAM)’. According to the statute of the “Lodewijk Woltjer Lecture” the selection of the laureate will be by the Council of the EAS. The laureate will receive a medal and a certificate.

With the naming of this award the EAS honours Professor Lodewijk Woltjer, one of Europe’s outstanding astronomers of the second half of the twentieth century. First of all Lodewijk Woltjer made significant contributions to theoretical astrophysics, from his fundamental work on the Crab nebula and his studies on hydromagnetic equilibrium to the energy source of Radio Galaxies and Quasars. After serving as chairman at the Astronomy Department of Columbia University in New York, a position he held for ten years, Lodewijk Wolter in 1975 became Director General of the European Southern Observatory (ESO). Under his leadership ESO established itself as one of the world's leading astronomical institutes.

Lodewijk Woltjer realised with great foresight what needed to be done in order for Europe to bridge the gap that existed in observational astronomy with other countries. He initiated the development of new instrumentation and telescope technology whose highlight, the Very Large Telescope, has become the world's most successful ground-based observatory and has re-established Europe's leadership in observational optical astronomy.

¹ The European Astronomical Society (EAS) was founded in 1990 as an association to contribute and promote the advancement of astronomy in Europe. In particular it is meant to deal with astronomical matters at a European level. It is a society of individual members, professional astronomers. The EAS is an organisation in which all European astronomers can be members independent of their field of work or country of work or origin. The society offers a forum for discussion on all aspects of astronomical development in Europe and is the organisation that represents the interests of astronomers in discussions of Europe-wide developments. The current President of the European Astronomical Society is Prof. Joachim Krautter, Heidelberg, Germany; Vice-Presidents are Prof. Martin Huber, Zürich, Switzerland, and Prof. Jan Palouš, Prague, Czech Republic.

Twenty years ago Lodewijk Woltjer initiated the foundation of the European Astronomical Society and became its first president. A few years later Lodewijk Woltjer became president of the International Astronomical Union.

EAS would like to thank Prof. Woltjer for his permission to name the new award after him and Council is delighted that he accepted to give the first “Lodewijk Woltjer Lecture” at the opening session of the ‘European Week of Astronomy and Space Science – JENAM 2010’ on Monday, September 7, 2010, in Lisbon, Portugal.

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