

Dr. Robert Jastrow

Dr. Robert Jastrow is known as an astronomer, author and science administrator. Dr. Jastrow's long and eminent career took him from Dartmouth College to NASA to the Mount Wilson Observatory, but he is best known to the public as a clear and cogent speaker and writer who explained the complexities of atmospheric science to the lay audience

Born in New York in 1925, Robert Jastrow was a prominent American scientist who worked in the U.S. lunar landing program, established and managed two significant scientific research centers, and played an active role in national public policy debates on national security and environmental policy. He earned A.B., A.M. and Ph.D. degrees in theoretical physics at Columbia University. Following post-doctoral studies, he became an assistant professor at Yale before joining the staff at the Naval Research Laboratory. In 1958, Homer Newell, the Assistant Director for Space Sciences of the newly formed National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), created its theoretical division to devote attention to basic research in cosmology, astronomy, and planetary sciences and recruited Jastrow to head it. Dr. Jastrow's contributions to the American presence in space were felt almost immediately.

With permission from NASA and in association with Columbia University, Dr. Jastrow organized the Goddard Institute for Space Studies and became its first Director when it opened its doors near the Columbia University campus in 1961. As a U.S. government laboratory charged with carrying out research in astronomy, atmospheric science, and weather and climate prediction, Goddard Institute scientists played a key role in the Pioneer, Voyager, and Galileo planetary missions, under Jastrow's guidance. In recognition of his work at NASA, Jastrow received the NASA Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement and the Arthur Fleming Award for Outstanding Service to the U.S. Government.

While serving Director of the Goddard Institute, Dr. Jastrow held joint professorial appointments in the Astronomy and Geology Departments at Columbia University. He stayed at the helm of the Goddard Institute for twenty years before becoming joining the faculty at Dartmouth College, where he held the position of Professor of Earth Sciences until 1992. In that year he resigned to become Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Mount Wilson Institute, which manages the Mount Wilson Observatory in California on behalf of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Dr. Jastrow retired as Director of the Mount Wilson Institute in January 2003. He was a member of the Board of Governors of the National Space Society.

Dr. Jastrow was a prolific author and public commentator on the space program, astronomy, earth science, and national security. Following his tenure at NASA, he worked to popularize atmospheric science and hosted more than 100 CBS-TV network programs on space science. He was the special guest of NBC-TV with Wernher von Braun for the Apollo-Soyuz flights, and he was the featured guest of the TODAY show on the 10th anniversary of the landing on the moon. Dr. Jastrow's articles in issues in science have appeared in the New York Times, Time, Reader's Digest, Foreign Affairs, Commentary, Atlantic Monthly and Scientific American.

Dr. Jastrow's books include *Red Giants and White Dwarfs – The Evolution of Stars, Planets and Life; Until the Sun Dies; God and the Astronomers; The Enchanted Loom – Mind in the Universe; Astronomy – Fundamentals and Frontiers; Journey to the Stars – Space Exploration Tomorrow and Beyond* and *Scientific Perspectives on the Greenhouse Problem* with William Nierenberg and Frederick Seitz.