



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Dr. William M. Jackson, Jr., to Receive Arthur B.C. Walker II Award from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific**

Distinguished Research and Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at the University of California, Davis, **Dr. William M. Jackson, Jr.**, to receive the 2019 Arthur B.C. Walker II award for outstanding achievement in astronomy and education by an African American scientist.

**SAN FRANCISCO, California – July 23, 2019** -The Astronomical Society of the Pacific's (ASP) **Arthur B.C. Walker II Award** honors an outstanding achievement by an African American in astronomy whose research efforts substantially contribute to astronomy and who has demonstrated a substantial commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in STEM. It was first awarded in 2016 to NASA mathematician and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Katherine Johnson. The 2019 recipient of the Arthur B.C. Walker II Award is **Dr. William M. Jackson, Jr.**, Distinguished Research and Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at the University of California, Davis.

Prof. Jackson is a renowned astrochemist who has studied the chemistry of comets, and in particular, how the free radicals observed in comets are formed. His accomplishments include leading the team that used the International Ultraviolet Explorer to make the first satellite telescope comet observation, developing special lasers to detect and determine the properties of radicals formed when molecules are broken apart by light, and using lasers to map the excited states of small molecules as they decompose into radicals important in the chemistry of comets, planetary atmospheres, and the interstellar medium.

William Jackson has worked tirelessly to diversify STEM fields throughout his career. Early in his career, Prof. Jackson assisted African Americans with an interest in chemistry by co-founding the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE), an organization that pioneered the successful Adopt-a-School program and Saturday Science Academy. After being appointed to the Howard University chemistry faculty, Jackson created an internationally recognized research group in laser chemistry where he mentored a cadre of outstanding minority students and postdoctoral associates who went on to premier institutions including AT&T Bell Laboratories, NIST, and NASA, as well as academia. At UC Davis in the 1980s, Jackson developed a landmark program to increase the numbers of minorities majoring in STEM: the Minority Undergraduate Research Participation in the Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MURPPS). This program paired underrepresented students in the sciences with faculty in their chosen fields and had an outreach component to local high schools and community colleges.



While Chair of the Chemistry department from 2000-2005 he doubled the number of graduate students from about 125 to 250 and increased the percentage of underrepresented minority URM students with a grant he obtained from the Sloan Foundation from about 9 to 18 %. There were 55 students in the program and 49 of them received their PhD degrees for an 89% success rate.

Join us in celebration of Dr. Jackson's achievements at the ASP Awards Gala (Ceremony and Banquet) on November 9, 2019, at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, Burlingame, CA.

### **About the ASP**

The Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP), established in 1889, is a 501c3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to use astronomy to increase the understanding and appreciation of science and to advance science and science literacy. The ASP connects scientists, educators, amateur astronomers and the public together to learn about astronomical research, improve astronomy education, and share resources that engage learners of all kinds in the excitement and adventure of scientific discovery. Current ASP programs and initiatives support college faculty, K-12 science teachers, amateur astronomy clubs, science museums, libraries, park rangers, and girl scouts to name a few.

Through its annual awards, ASP recognizes achievement in research, technology, education, and public outreach. The awards include the ASP's highest honor, the Catherine Wolfe Bruce Gold Medal awarded since 1898 for a lifetime of outstanding research in astronomy. The Bruce Medal has gone to some of the greatest astronomers of the past century, including Arthur Eddington, Edwin P. Hubble, Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, and Vera Rubin. The ASP also presents the Klumpke-Roberts Award for outstanding contributions to the public understanding and appreciation of astronomy. Awardees include Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, and the Hubble Heritage Project.

More information about the ASP's awards and past recipients can be found at [www.astrosociety.org/awards](http://www.astrosociety.org/awards)

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