



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **William Keith Turner to receive the 2025 Thomas J. Brennan Award demonstrating excellence in the teaching of astronomy at the high school level in North America**

**San Francisco, California – September 10, 2025** - The Astronomical Society of the Pacific's (ASP) **Thomas J. Brennan Award** is given to an individual demonstrating excellence in the teaching of astronomy at the high school level in North America. **William Keith Turner**, teacher and Planetarium Director at Carmel High School in Carmel, Indiana, receives the **2025 Thomas J. Brennan Award** for excellence in the teaching of astronomy, commitment to classroom or planetarium education, and training of teachers.

Turner's exceptional and ongoing commitment to sharing his knowledge of the Universe has reached thousands of students whether directly through his classroom, via a planetarium, or through the training of other teachers. As a High School teacher alone, Turner has given his students the experiences of a lifetime using his passion for hands-on learning and giving his students the opportunity to use professional equipment and even space probes. His students were involved with the 3.5-meter WYIN telescope at Kitt Peak National Observatory collecting star-field images and watching professional astronomers at work with the telescope. His students even received recognition such as the national NASA competition to study Mars using the *Mars Odyssey* spacecraft orbiting the planet. These opportunities and enrichment gave me "the hands-on skills in practicing presentations, public speaking, and learning how to help manage projects and time," recalls a former student. He further praises that "working with Keith at the planetarium [helped me] develop skills I use every day as an engineer at Google and led to a lifelong love of astronomy that I am now passing on to my children."

As planetarium director, Turner did not just create programs, but updated facility technology, such as the automation of video effects and star projectors, to encourage and promote more student interest in astronomy. His mentoring led to students building skills such as providing proof of learning through explanation, calculations, and questioning. He also adjusted night sky presentations and to include sign language into the darkness of planetarium shows so that the deaf community could take his astronomy classes. His 10 years as a summer instructor at Ball State University offered summer workshops for planetarium staff nationwide and involved training in program design and visual creation techniques. Turner's outreach events included the celebration of the April 8, 2024 Total Solar Eclipse, or the Transit of Venus in 2004, bringing the wonders of the universe to the public, not just students and educators.



Turner's leadership in his school and within his profession merited the multiple awards thanking him for his commitment such as NASA's 2010 Gold and Top Star Award for his "Adopt a Constellation" project, or the two Lilly Endowment Teacher Creative Fellowship Awards. "Keith is an excellent role model for staff and students and was selected in 2023 as one of Carmel High School's Most Influential Teachers," praises his nominator.

Join us in celebration of William Keith Turner's achievements at the in-person ASP Awards Gala on Saturday, November 8, 2025 at the Hilton San Francisco Airport Bayfront, 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.

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