



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dr. Chryssa Kouveliotou to receive the 2024 Catherine Wolfe Bruce Gold Medal from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific

San Francisco, California – September 16, 2024 - The Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) is proud to announce the 2024 recipient of its most prestigious award, the **Catherine Wolfe Bruce Gold Medal** honoring **Dr. Chryssa Kouveliotou**, a recognized leader in the field of high-energy astrophysics, having made groundbreaking discoveries and landmark contributions to the nature and origins of gamma ray sources, in particular magnetars and gamma-ray bursts.

Prof. Kouveliotou has been at the forefront of research in the study of gamma ray sources starting with her PhD thesis in 1981. She ultimately received global recognition for her study of gamma-ray bursts, and the landmark discovery that there are two distinct populations of these events, based on their duration and their photon energy. She also played a critical role in the international collaboration that found the first multiwavelength “afterglows” of gamma-ray bursts coming from cosmic explosions - a discovery that revolutionized the field. In the early 1990s, Prof. Kouveliotou discovered that short, but exceptionally bright, bursts of gamma rays were coming from neutron stars with especially strong magnetic fields. Dubbed “magnetars,” this class of neutron star was theoretically predicted by astrophysicists around the same time, opening a whole new field of study in which Prof. Kouveliotou has led for three decades.

Dr. Kouveliotou received her PhD from the Technical University of Munich in 1982, joining the Section of Astrophysics and Astronomy Mechanics in the Physics Department at the University of Athens, Greece. Originally a contractor with NASA she began her career in 1994 with NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. She became a US citizen in 2002 and then was hired by NASA as a civil servant at the highest Government grade. In 2013 she was promoted to a Senior Technologist of High-Energy Astrophysics until she joined The George Washington University faculty as a Full Professor in Astrophysics. In 2015 she founded the *George Washington Astronomy, Physics, and Statistics Institute of Sciences*, a multidisciplinary Institute focused on multiwavelength observations, statistical inference, modeling, and simulations of high-energy phenomena in the universe.

Under her leadership at The George Washington University, a vibrant research group evolved into a hub for research in high-energy astrophysics. A nominator and colleague effusively expressed “she has not only continued her leadership in her research through high-profile publications, but she has also provided springboards for early-career scientists like me to grow and become leaders in their respective research fields.”

While at NASA, she was charged by the Astrophysics Subcommittee of the Science Committee of NASA’s Advisory Council to chair a task force on the strategic planning and roadmap of NASA’s Science Mission Directorate/Astrophysics Division. Their report, *Enduring Quests - Daring Visions: NASA Astrophysics in the Next Three Decades*, preceded and set the stage for the *2020 Decadal Survey for Astrophysics*. Dr. Kouveliotou has been the principal investigator of numerous research projects in the United States and Europe and a founding member of multiple scientific collaborations worldwide. She is an affiliate scientist of the NASA Swift and of the Fermi GBM missions, and the Science co-chair of XTRA, a mission to be proposed for the next NASA Medium Explorer program.



Dr. Kouveliotou currently has 495 refereed publications, of which 49 are in the prestigious journals, *Nature* and *Science*. She is one of the 249 most-cited space science researchers worldwide with a current total of 50,083 citations and 427,258 reads. For her numerous landmark achievements and contributions to our understanding of the cosmos, she has received a number of prestigious awards and honors, including membership in the National Academy of Sciences in the United States, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, foreign membership in the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences, a corresponding member in the Athens Academy, Greece, two honorary PhD's (University of Sussex, United Kingdom and University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands), NASA's Exceptional Service Medal, the *Bruno Rossi Prize* from the High Energy Astrophysics of the American Astronomical Society, the European Union's *Descartes Prize*, the *Dannie Heineman Prize* awarded jointly by the American Astronomical Society and American Institute of Physics, and the *Shaw Prize* for Astronomy.

Join us in celebration of Dr. Kouveliotou's achievements at the in-person ASP Awards Gala on Saturday, November 9, 2024 in Burlingame, CA.

About the Medal

The Catherine Wolfe Bruce Medal was established by an American philanthropist and patroness of astronomy Catherine Wolfe Bruce. The ASP presents the medal annually to a professional astronomer in recognition of a lifetime of outstanding achievement and contributions to astrophysics research. It was first awarded in 1898 to Simon Newcomb. Previous recipients of the Bruce Medal include Giovanni V. Schiaparelli (1902) Edwin Hubble (1938), Bart Bok (1970), Vera Rubin (2003) and Marcia Rieke (2023).

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 and current century, including Bart Bok, Edwin P. Hubble, Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, Vera Rubin, and Marcia Rieke. 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, Dava Sobel, and the Hubble Heritage Project.

For more information, visit our website at astrosociety.org/awards

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Contact: Joycelin Craig
Director, Community & Communications
Astronomical Society of the Pacific
390 Ashton Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94112
www.astrosociety.org



E-mail: jcraig@astrosociety.org