



ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Incorporated in the ACT

ABN 37 660 297 848

The 2022 Berenice and Arthur Page Medal

Announced at the NACAA
Melbourne, 16 April 2022

The Berenice and Arthur Page Medal is awarded every two years by the Astronomical Society of Australia (ASA). The Medal recognises excellence in amateur astronomy in Australia and its territories, based on scientific contributions which have served to advance astronomy.

The award was established in 1972 as the Berenice Page Medal, through a bequest by the late Mrs Berenice Page of Brisbane. The nature of the award was developed with the support and consultation of Berenice's husband, Arthur Page.

Berenice and Arthur were exceptional amateur astronomers and foundation members of the ASA. Formed in 1966, the ASA is the organisation for professional astronomers in Australia. The Pages were readily accepted as members of the society because of the indispensable part they played in the *IAU Flare Star Programme* in the 1960's. This work involved collaborating with astronomers from the CSIRO Division of Radiophysics to observe the spectacular and unpredictable outbursts of stars.

Arthur Page remained an ASA member until his death in 2011 and, with his family's consent, the ASA renamed the award as the Berenice and Arthur Page Medal, to honour the achievements and dedication of both Berenice and Arthur towards astronomy.

Berenice Rose was trained as a pharmaceutical chemist, graduating in 1951. She moved up through the profession and was managing her own pharmacy in Brisbane in the late 1960's. Throughout this time she

had a deep interest in astronomy, building her own 22.5cm Newtonian telescope in the 1950's.

Arthur Page was fascinated by astronomy from an early age. His family came to Australia in 1941, fleeing Japan during World War II. He joined the Australian Army, where his astronomy knowledge proved to be life-saving. His patrol unit became lost in the swampy jungle of New Guinea and Arthur, to his Commander's amazement, used the Sun and stars to guide the unit to safety.

Many years later, in 1954, Arthur built a 15-cm Newtonian telescope for the purpose of astrophotography. Bart Bok, then Director of Mount Stromlo Observatory, was so impressed with the results that Arthur was invited to work at the observatory as a Visiting Observer.

Arthur later returned to Brisbane and met Berenice in 1963 when they worked together on the *IAU Flare Star Programme*. They were married the following year, and together established the Page Observatory near Brisbane, constructing a 31cm Schmidt for photographic observations, mainly of flare stars.

Berenice and Arthur contributed a great deal to astronomy throughout the 1960's. Sadly, at the height of her career, Berenice was struck down by a cerebral haemorrhage and died in July 1970 at just over 40 years of age. The amateur and professional astronomical communities suffered a severe blow and felt a deep sense of loss. Members of the ASA learnt with gratitude of Berenice's wish to leave a portion of her estate to the ASA for the advancement of astronomy in Australia.

In 1971, Arthur built a new observatory on Mount Tamborine, south of Brisbane. His astronomy work was prolific, including the publication of the *Atlas of Flare Stars Within the Solar Neighbourhood* in 1988. In 1993, his observatory was moved to Mount Kent, near Toowoomba, with help from the University of Queensland and the University of Southern Queensland. The University of Southern

Queensland now operates the observatory for stellar photometry and as a teaching tool for students.

The Medal was first awarded in May 1973 and now stands as an impressive record of outstanding Australian amateur astronomers.

The most recent award in 2020, was made to TG Tan who designed, built and operates the Perth Exoplanet Survey Telescope Observatory.

TG has co-discovered more than 70 exoplanets so far, including one potentially habitable planet. He has collaborated and published with many of the world's professional exoplanet search teams and is currently a member of the Follow-up Observing Program for NASA's TESS mission working to confirm TESS planet candidates. TG has developed novel observing and analysis techniques that he has shared freely with the amateur astronomy community.

Astronomy is unique in the extent to which amateurs and professionals can work together to build knowledge. Amateur astronomers have played an indispensable role in many research teams. There are a large number of phenomena in the sky to observe and a much smaller number of instruments to make those observations. Amateur astronomers help fill this gap and their work is greatly valued by professional astronomers and the ASA.

Astronomy also advances by keeping the public informed of astronomical events and great contributions are made by amateurs in this area through their tireless efforts. Professional astronomers are keenly aware of the importance of an informed and interested public, as they depend on public support through the Australian Government. Australian astronomy has been generously supported in the past and this is likely to continue if the public remain interested in and excited by, the contributions made by all astronomers.

And so we come to the 23rd award of the Berenice and Arthur Page Medal...

Previous Winners

- 2020 Mr Thiam-Guan 'TG' Tan – Perth Exoplanet Survey Telescope observations
- 2018 Prof David Moriarty – eclipsing binaries & its application to models of stellar evolution
- 2016 Dr Roy Axelsen – photometric observations & the Fourier analysis of Delta Scuti variables
- 2014 Prof Tim Napier-Munn – precision modelling to resolve binary stars
- 2012 Mr Anthony Wesley – observations of transitory events in the atmospheres of Jupiter & Saturn
- 2010 Mr David Gault – significant observations of Pluto occultations
- 2008 Mr John Broughton – the systematic survey of Near Earth Objects, including numerous occultation timings
- 2006 Dr Tom Richards – CCD photometric lightcurve observations of minor planets, variable stars and contributions to exoplanet searches
- 2004 Mr Colin Bembrick – photometric lightcurve observations of minor planets and derivation of their rotation periods
- 2002 The Reynolds Amateur Photometry Team – photometric observations of distant supernovae and gravitational microlensing events
- 2000 Mr Andrew Pearce – observations of comets, variable stars and novae
- 1998 Mr Gordon Garradd – observation of asteroids, comets, novae and supernovae
- 1996 Mr Peter Williams – visual observations of variable stars, especially the R Coronae Borealis variables
- 1994 Mr Paul Camilleri – discoveries of novae and Mira variables and the development of simple photographic techniques for nova searches
- 1992 Dr Mal Wilkinson – the design and construction of a radio-telescope to observe and model the Io-Jupiter system
- 1990 Mr Barry Adcock – telescope design work and planetary observations
- 1988 Mr Robert McNaught – photographic nova & supernova discoveries
- 1986 The Reverend Robert Evans – visual discoveries of supernovae
- 1983 Mr Byron Soulsby – work on the oblateness of the umbral shadow
- 1981 Mr Bill Bradfield – the discovery of 11 comets (to date at that time)
- 1975 Mr David Herald – observations of Baily's Beads in the 1974 solar eclipse
- 1973 Mr S.J. Elwin – observations of the occultation of Beta Scorpii by Jupiter.