

IAU-GRUBER FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP 2012 AWARDED TO ANNA LISA VARRI



During the Inaugural Ceremony of the XX-VIII IAU General Assembly, the IAU-Gruber Foundation Fellowship 2012, a cash prize of USD 50,000 was awarded to Anna Lisa Varri for her work on stellar dynamics. The winner was born and raised in Milan, Italy. Her interest in astrophysics sparked during high school when she came across the subject almost by accident in a science textbook. She decided to drop humanities for what it was and enrolled in physics. She was introduced to astrophysics by her supervisor Giuseppe Bertin, working for her master thesis on non-spherical stellar dynamics.

She obtained her Ph.D. from the Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy) where she

graduated a month ago. Her research focused on understanding the structure and dynamics of globular star clusters using analytical models and numerical simulations. As a Fulbright Visiting Student Researcher, she also spent time at Drexel University, under the supervision of Enrico Vesperini and Stephen McMillan, primarily performing numerical simulations designed to investigate the dynamical stability and the long-term evolution of rotating dense stellar systems.

After having met a previous Gruber Foundation Fellow at Northwestern University and noticing the announcement on the IAU website, Anna Lisa decided to apply for the Gruber Foundation Fellowship. After finding out that she was the winner of the 2012 round, she started her postdoctoral appointment as a

Gruber Foundation Fellow at the Department of Astronomy at Indiana University, where the study of Galactic and extragalactic star clusters is a long-standing and prominent research theme, both from the theoretical and observational point of view. Together with Enrico Vesperini (Indiana) and Steve McMillan (Drexel) she will focus her attention on four open problems in this field: the effects of angular momentum in the early formation stages, the dynamical characterization of multiple stellar populations, the role of internal rotation in the kinematics of the central regions, and the interplay between internal rotation and external tidal fields. Congratulations, Anna Lisa! ■

Thijs Kouwenhoven

Professor, Kavli Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics

MICROSOFT RESEARCH AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL UNION IN BEIJING

Astrophysics is one of the oldest science disciplines and remains one of the most inspirational areas of scientific discovery. In the "big data" era, the IAU 2012 gathering includes researchers and educators not only in the traditional fields of astronomy and astrophysics, but also informatics, data science, and computer science.

Microsoft Research has a long history of working with the astronomical community. The data- and information-intensive problems presented by the All-Sky Surveys and the Virtual Observatory (VO) have stimulated many innovative software science and engineering ideas at Microsoft Research (MSR). One of the most successful outcomes of the collaboration between MSR and the astronomical community is the WorldWide Telescope, WWT.

WWT was originally created as an educational tool, but it has rapidly become the very best example of the all-sky "Virtual Observatory" research astronomers have been working toward since the advent of the Internet. Today, WWT is the single richest source of astronomical imagery and links online, and it is loved by educators and researchers alike. - Alyssa Goodman, Professor of Astronomy, Harvard University

WWT enables a computer to function as a virtual telescope and more. The WWT software aggregates the best data and imagery from all the main space- and ground-based telescopes in the world; connects seamlessly to the information behind the imagery; allows users to lay their own data on top of the common sky and the Earth imagery; and enables users to tell stories with data very easily. Since the first release in early 2008, WWT has gained millions of users worldwide. For many astronomical professionals, especially educators, WWT has made a fundamental difference in their career. With an exponentially growing community, WWT will continue to serve the users and contribute to the advance of compu-

JD5: FROM METEORS AND METEORITES TO THEIR PARENT BODIES:

CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Joint Discussion 5 will be held from 22 to 24 August. The aim is to share the latest knowledge on the small Solar System bodies and also the possible parent bodies of



Leonid meteor storm appeared over Japan in 2001 (Credit: M. Tsumura). This storm provided new insight to the evolution of meteor showers.

meteors, meteorites and interplanetary dust from as wide a perspective as possible. Latest results will be presented from several international campaigns of ground-based observations, space missions to comets and asteroids (HAYABUSA, DAWN, EPOXI, Post-Stardust, Rosetta, etc.) and meteorite falls and recoveries. Together with dynamical studies, these new results will shed light on physical and chemical relationships between such small bodies. Intensive discussion will create effec-

tional astronomy research and science education.

At the IAU 2012, Microsoft Research is proudly presenting the WorldWide Telescope at exhibition booth #46. Together with the WWT Ambassadors from Harvard University, academic collaborators from the National Astronomical Observatory of Chinese Academy of Sciences and China Central Normal University, we are ready to impress and engage with IAU 2012 attendees and create more successful stories of WWT.

"I am immensely impressed with WWT as a teaching and outreach tool and what MR has done to make it both appealing and practical. The IAU has recently commenced a large global program to use astronomy as a tool for education and technology development and I believe that WWT should

be a key element in that entire effort." - Bob Williams, President of the International Astronomical Union (IAU)

WWT has set forth a successful example for Microsoft to develop mutually beneficial collaborations with academia. In addition to WWT, we are looking forward to introducing visitors at our booth to other cutting-edge Microsoft technologies, including Layerscape, Microsoft Translator, and Kinect for Windows. ■



Junichi Watanabe

President of Commission 22 IAU; Vice-director general of NAOJ



Yan Xu

Senior Research Program Manager, Earth, Energy, and Environment at Microsoft Research