

# Newsletter 17-11

Issue 17-11, March 8, 2017

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IN MEMORIAM: TOBIAS C. OWEN (1936-2017)

Tobias (Toby) C. Owen died on March 4, 2017. With his passing, science has lost a great talent, a valued colleague, and to many in the US and abroad, a close friend. A former student of G. P. Kuiper, Toby's earliest work was in spectroscopy of the giant planets, and this interest quickly broadened to encompass all aspects of the origin and evolution of planetary atmospheres. With a special interest in isotopic abundances, he pursued and promoted a wide range of observational and theoretical investigations toward understanding the origins of all the planets and small bodies of the Solar System. As one of the world's leading planetary scientists, he was an active participant in a great number of missions, including Apollo 15 and 16, Viking, Voyager, Galileo, Rosetta, Juno, and Cassini-Huygens. He played a leading role in the development of the Cassini-Huygens mission as a joint project of NASA and ESA, and was called upon frequently to promote this and other missions to funding agencies in Europe as well as to NASA. Toby had close ties with European colleagues, notably in France where he inspired a vigorous planetary group at the Paris Observatory, and also promoted collaboration with planetary scientists in the

USSR/Russia and in other countries. The DPS as a division of the AAS began with the initiative of Frank Drake, Carl Sagan, and Toby, acting on a suggestion of Juan Oro and with the support of several planetary specialists at Kitt Peak National Observatory. In 1968, Toby and Carl forged the relationship with the AAS that persists to the present time. The full story can be found on the DPS website at:

[https://dps.aas.org/history/chamberlain\\_cruikshank\\_1999](https://dps.aas.org/history/chamberlain_cruikshank_1999) [1]

Toby was a professor at SUNY Stony Brook for many years, and then at the University of Hawaii, where he was affiliated until his passing. He will be remembered as a man of the world, unfailingly generous and modest, and a great scientist. He inspired all of his many colleagues with his enthusiasm for all aspects of planetary science, including the big questions of the origin of the Solar System and of life in the Universe. Toby received a number of honors in the US and in Europe, and in 2009, he was awarded the Gerard P. Kuiper Prize of the DPS.

Dale Cruikshank

DPS Historian

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