

## Brief Narrative Biography: Heidi B. Hammel

Dr. Heidi B. Hammel received her undergraduate degree from MIT in 1982 and her Ph.D. in physics and astronomy from the University of Hawaii in 1988. After a post-doctoral position at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, she returned to MIT, where she spent nearly nine years as a Principal Research Scientist. She then worked as a Senior Research Scientist and co-Director of Research at the Space Science Institute until 2011.

Dr. Hammel is now the Executive Vice President of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA). AURA -- a consortium of 44 U.S. universities and institutions, as well as five international affiliates -- operates world-class astronomical observatories including Hubble, the National Optical Astronomy Observatory, the National Solar Observatory, and the Gemini Observatory. AURA is also building the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope on Maui, and the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope in Chile.

Dr. Hammel primarily studies planets. Her current research involves studies of Uranus and Neptune with Hubble, the Keck 10-m telescope, and other Earth-based observatories. In 1994 when comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 crashed into Jupiter, Dr. Hammel was the leader of the Hubble Space Telescope team that analyzed images of the event. She was also a member of the team that first spotted Neptune's Great Dark Spot with the Voyager 2 spacecraft, and led the Hubble team that later documented that Great Dark Spot's disappearance. Since 2003, she has served as one of six Interdisciplinary Scientists advising NASA on the science development of the James Webb Space Telescope, the space observatory that will succeed Hubble.

Dr. Hammel has been widely recognized for her science. She was profiled by the New York Times in 2008<sup>[1]</sup>, Newsweek Magazine in 2007<sup>[2]</sup>, and was identified as one of the 50 most important women in science by Discover Magazine in 2002<sup>[3]</sup>. She was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2000. In 1996, she received the Urey Prize from the American Astronomical Society's Division for Planetary Sciences.

Dr. Hammel has also been lauded for her work in public outreach, including the 2002 Sagan Medal for outstanding communication by an active planetary scientist to the general public, the 1996 "Spirit of American Women" National Award for encouraging young women to follow non-traditional career paths, and the San Francisco Exploratorium's 1998 Public Understanding of Science Award. Asteroid "1981 EC20" has been renamed 3530 *Hammel* in her honor.

[1] <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/02/science/02conv.html>

[2] <http://www.newsweek.com/id/70975>

[3] <http://discovermagazine.com/2002/nov/feat50>

