

Biography

Dr. Christopher McKee

University of California, Berkeley

Christopher McKee received his AB degree from Harvard in 1963, and his PhD in physics from Berkeley in 1970, where a Hertz Fellowship supported him. After a year as a postdoctoral fellow at Caltech and several years as an assistant professor of astronomy at Harvard University, he joined both the Department of Physics and the Department of Astronomy at Berkeley, where he has been since 1974. He has carried out theoretical investigations of a wide variety of astrophysical phenomena, ranging from the interstellar medium of the Galaxy to quasars and cosmic gamma-ray bursts. His current research focuses on the structure and evolution of molecular clouds and the star formation that occurs within them: How do low mass stars like the Sun form? How do the massive stars that create most of the heavy elements form? What determines the rate of star formation in galaxies? How did the first stars form? With Richard Klein and their joint students and post docs, he studies these problems with high-resolution numerical simulations. He and his collaborators developed the turbulent core model for massive star formation and the first comprehensive theory for the rate of star formation in galaxies.

He has received a number of honors for his work: He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a fellow of the American Physical Society. He has been the Sackler Lecturer at Harvard University, at the University of Toronto, and at Tel Aviv University, the Bahcall Lecturer at Tel Aviv University, and the Antoinette de Vaucouleurs Medalist and Lecturer at the University of Texas. He was awarded the Henry Norris Russell Lectureship by the American Astronomical Society in 2016.

He has held a number of administrative positions, including serving as founding director of the Theoretical Astrophysics Center (1985), the director of the Space Sciences Laboratory (1985-1998), the chair of the Physics Department (2000-2004), the Interim Dean of Mathematical and Physical Sciences (2014), and the Interim Vice Chancellor for Research (2015-16). With Joseph Taylor of Princeton University he co-chaired the *Astronomy and Astrophysics Decadal Survey* (1998- 2001) and is currently a member of the Academies' *Committee on Astronomy and Astrophysics* that is charged to provide advice to the federal government on the implementation of the 2010 *New Worlds New Horizons* decadal survey in astronomy and astrophysics.