



WILLIAM H. WEHLAU (1926 - 1995)

The astronomical world lost an accomplished but humble scientist when Professor Emeritus William (Bill) H. Wehlau passed away in Cape Town soon after the close of this Colloquium. Although a tragic footnote to the meeting, it seems fitting that Bill's final scientific endeavours were at a conference on stellar pulsation, since he was a genuine pioneer in the field on several fronts.

Bill laid the foundation for many of the astronomical period-searching techniques we take for granted today. His 1964 paper with Kam-Ching Leung (ApJ 139, 843) on the multiple periods of δ Delphini was the first published use of Fourier integral techniques to interpret stellar light curves. The quality and quantity of data (25 nights of three-colour photometry) and sophistication of the fit (a sum of 6 cosines) would not be out of place in the modern literature on asteroseismology of δ Scuti variables (see his paper in these Proceedings). In the next decade, Bill again was a pioneer; this time in stellar surface imaging through inversion of spectral line-profile variations into abundance and temperature maps of Ap stars. Such techniques are now widely used to analyse high-degree NRP in rapid rotators. By the 1980s, Bill's diverse interests in pulsation and spectral peculiarity converged in the rapidly oscillating Ap stars. He played key roles in the first detection of velocity oscillations in an rAp star and in translating optical-IR photometry of rAp pulsations into the first empirical atmospheric temperature profile for a star other than the Sun.

Bill's modesty meant he never considered himself a pioneer, but even he might have found it hard to dismiss an impressive legacy which includes: the Astronomy Department and Observatory he founded in 1966 at the University of Western Ontario and headed for 25 years; the success of the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope which he helped guide in its early years as Chair of its Board and Advisory Council; and several powerful analytical tools which are still advancing our knowledge of stars.

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