

Preface

Every 2 or 3 years, astronomers interested in stellar pulsation and its many applications have organised a meeting in a different part of the world. This was the first time that such a meeting had been held in South Africa. The topic of the conference, Astrophysical Applications of Stellar Pulsation, was highly appropriate as South African astronomers have made seminal contributions to the study of pulsating stars over many years. Many new and exciting results were announced during the conference and there was much stimulating discussion.

In total 152 astronomers from 26 countries attended this conference in Cape Town from 6-10 February 1995. The conference, which was hosted by the South African Astronomical Observatory, was unique for a number of reasons. First, it was the largest gathering of astronomers ever to take place in South Africa. Secondly, it was the first time the International Astronomical Union had supported a conference on the African continent. Thirdly, a unique experience was provided for participants who were accommodated in an old prison (Breakwater Lodge), and attended the scientific sessions in a mental institution (Valkenberg Hospital), which happens to have a superb conference venue adjacent to SAAO. We hope that all astronomers got out again!

Prior to the conference we took advantage of the presence of international astronomers interested in "astronomy in science education" to hold a one-day workshop on this subject (organised by Dr P A Whitelock and Prof J Percy). The aim was to show teachers how they might use astronomy to stimulate an interest in science, and to provide exciting illustrations of basic physical principles. The workshop was attended by over 100 teachers and trainee-teachers and was highly successful, judging by the comments of the teachers.

Returning to the pulsation conference, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who contributed to the success of the pulsation meeting: the Scientific Organising Committee for generating a stimulating scientific programme; the Local Organising Committee for their effort in ensuring the smooth running of the conference; the Sponsors for the financial support; and last, but not least, the participants for ensuring a very successful conference.

Sponsors

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R. S. Stobie and P. A. Whitelock
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