Professor Virginia Trimble receives Pais Prize from American Physical Society

The prize honors decades of work contributing to the history of physics and astronomy.

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Professor Virginia Trimble of the UC Irvine Department of Physics & Astronomy

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Professor Virginia Trimble of the UC Irvine Department of Physics & Astronomy recently received the 2024 Pais Prize from the American Physical Society. The Pais Prize is a career award that honors contributions to the history of physics and astronomy – something Trimble has done throughout her decades-long career in astronomy. Since 1985, Trimble has regularly delivered historical talks at professional conferences on topics like galactic structure, dark matter, cosmology, binary stars, high-energy astrophysics and general relativity. Trimble is also a

leading editor and contributing author for the first two editions of the Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers and is currently at work on the third edition. “My deep thanks of course to Dr. Gregory Good, formerly of the American Institute of Physics, who nominated me, and to the two writers of supporting letters,” said Trimble. “And collectively to very many astronomers and physicists whose discoveries and other contributions I remember as having happened as current events, though they are now history to multiple younger generations.” Historian of science Professor Catherine Westfall of Michigan State University is organizing the prize session in Trimble’s honor for the April 2024 meeting of APS, where one of her former summer interns, Katelyn Horstman, now a graduate student at Caltech, will be speaking alongside Professor Paul Halpern of St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia.

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