

How We Got from Then (1971) to Now ----

The Annie Jump Cannon Award and the First Working Group on the Status of Women in Astronomy

In May 1971 Margaret Burbidge declined the AJC Award --



“I believe that it is high time that discrimination in favor of, as well as against women in professional life be removed, and a prize restricted to women is in this category”

Underlying this official statement was the suspicion that the AJC award had kept women from receiving other awards.

“It would be interesting to know, however, how often our names have been excluded from consideration for professorships, directorships ... because we are women.”

Roberta M. Humphreys, University of Minnesota

AAS prizes/awards in 1971 --

Russell Lectureship (1946)

1971 Fred Hoyle
1970 Jesse L. Greenstein
1969 Eugene N. Parker
1968 John G. Bolton
1967 O. Neugebauer
1966 Richard Tousey
1965 B.G. Stromgren
1964 I.S. Bowen
1963 William A. Fowler
1962 Grote Reber
1961 W.W. Morgan
1960 Martin Schwarzschild
1959 Gerard P. Kuiper
1958 Walter Baade
1957 Otto Struve
1956 Joel Stebbins
1955 Paul Merrill
1953 Lyman Spitzer, Jr.
1953 Enrico Fermi
1951 Jan H. Oort

Warner Prize

1971 Kenneth Kellermann
1970 John N. Bahcall
1969 Wallace L. W. Sargent
1968 Frank J. Low
1967 Pierre Demarque
1966 Riccardo Giacconi
1965 George W. Preston
1964 Maarten Schmidt
1963 Bernard F. Burke
1962 Robert Kraft
1961 Joseph W. Chamberlain

1960 Halton C. Arp
1959 **E. Margaret Burbidge
& Geoffrey Burbidge**
1958 Merle F. Walker
1957 Allan R. Sandage
1956 Harold Johnson
1955 George H. Herbig
1954 Aden B. Meinel

E. Margaret Burbidge & Geoffrey Burbidge



The Annie Jump Cannon Award --- 1932- 1933 established by Miss Cannon



In 1932, she had received the Helen Richards Research Prize of \$1000 from the Association to Aid Scientific Research by Women.

“I wish to convey through you to the committee, to the donors, and to all the members of the former Association ... my very great appreciation of this prize. **I hope to use it to advance, in some way, astronomical research by women**”. AJC June 10, 1932



She used the \$1000 to endow the Annie Jump Cannon Award to be awarded biennially or triennially to deserving women of any nationality

Rules for the Annie J. Cannon Award (1933)

1. The award shall be known as the Annie J. Cannon Award
2. The award shall be made to women in recognition of their work in astronomy
3. The recipients shall be selected by the Council of the AAS
4. Award shall not be made oftener than once in two years
5. The award shall be made with the accumulated income of the capital fund

Added later

That it be international, the term astronomy interpreted liberally, made at the Society dinner. A small part of the income be awarded as a medal or token.

Recipients

| | |
|------|--------------------------|
| 1968 | Henrietta H. Swope |
| 1965 | Erika Böhm-Vitense |
| 1962 | Margaret Harwood |
| 1958 | Margaret W. Mayall |
| 1955 | Helen Dodson Prince |
| 1952 | Ida Barney |
| 1949 | Helen S. Hogg |
| 1946 | Emma W. Vyssotsky |
| 1943 | Antonia C. Maury |
| 1940 | Julie M. Vinter-Hansen |
| 1937 | Charlotte M. Sitterly |
| 1934 | Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin |

1971 -- 1972 -- 1973

August 1971 Council of AAS (Amherst Mass.) established the
“Special Cannon Prize Committee “

Members –

George Preston -- chairman, member of Council

Anne Cowley

Helen Sawyer Hogg (AJC award 1949)

Roberta Humphreys

William Liller

Benjamin Peery

Sidney Wolff

Charge to Committee – 1. assemble as many courses that the AAS
could take 2. and arrive at 1 or at most 2 proposals

Initial Reactions – hostility, support for change, strong dependence on age

The committee suggestions:

no change

abolish it

open to both men and women

upgrade prize equal to Russell

An aside -- It was Miss Cannon's desire to give an appropriate memento -- 1st recipient Cecilia Payne Gaposchkin – a gold pin (a brooch) in the shape of a spiral galaxy with a loop so could be worn on a chain. (pg 242 The Glass Universe, by Dava Sobel) . For each prize winner the craftswoman created her own design. Pg 246



Margaret Harwood -- AJC award 1962
With her papers at the Scheslinger
Library for the History of Women in
America

No consensus on Committee -- George Preston (May 1972) described it as a Pandora's Box -- '2 women – open to men and women, or abolish it, 2 women – keep as is or abolish it and the 3 men sat on the fence.'

Called for a meeting of AJC Committee at East Lansing AAS August 1972

There were legal issues and the desires of the bequest

The Committee's Recommendation ---

1. The purpose of the award shall continue to be **to encourage research in astronomy by women**
2. The award shall be based on a competition among applicants in the early stages of their careers
3. The award shall be administered by the American Association of University Women (or similar organization). That organization will seek professional advice as it desires.

No further changes in the rules as adopted in 1933.

We suggest that the applicants submit a research proposal and a statement of how the funds will benefit her research.

We were allowed to present the recommendation to the AAS Council and were given permission to even attend George's presentation and the discussion, BUT not allowed to speak (!).

Accepted by Council August 1972

A potential divisive development – Margaret Burbidge objected to the recommendation -- discriminatory. Wanted to argue to the Council for “an award a first-class award of international standing for men and women” Later resolved as “best compromise” .

Entered into negotiations with AAUW. Finalized in 1973

The AJC Award from 1974 to 2004---administered by AAUW

To encourage young women to participate in significant research in astronomy

not more than 35 years of age

career interest in research in astronomy

submit a plan of study or research which will advance knowledge and
continue nominee's continuing achievement

no restriction on nationality or place or research

A nomination with a selection committee – 3 from AAS and one from AAUW

But as initially announced by AAUW, was somewhat different than what the
committee had in mind --- no age restriction (AAUW)

24 young women received it

1974 Beatrice Tinsley

1976 Catherine Garmany

1978 Paula Szkody

1980 Lee Anne Willson

1982 Judith Young

1984 Harriet Dinerstein

1986 Rosemary Wyse

Impact on AAS Awards?? Since 1971

Russell

- 1976 Cecilia Payne Gaposchkin
- 1984 E. Margaret Burbidge
- 1994 Vera C. Rubin
- 2010 Margaret Geller
- 2011 Sandra Faber

Pierce since 1974

- 1988 Sallie Baliunas
- 1989 Harriet Dinerstein
- 1990 Kristen Sellgren
- 1997 Alyssa Goodman
- 1998 Andrea Ghez
- 2002 Amy Barger
- 2014 Nadia Zakamska
- 2015 Heather Knutson
- 2016 Karin Oberg

Warner

- 2007 Sara Seager
- 2015 Ruth Murray-Clay

Heineman since 1980

- 1985 Sandra Faber
- 2012 Chryssa Kouveliotou
- 2013 Rachel Somerville
- 2016 Wendy Freedman

Second Recommendation – A Working Group on the Status of Women in Astronomy

“the problem of women in professional life transcends the disposition of the AJ Cannon award which is only the tip of an iceberg, we recommend that the AAS sponsor a working group ...”

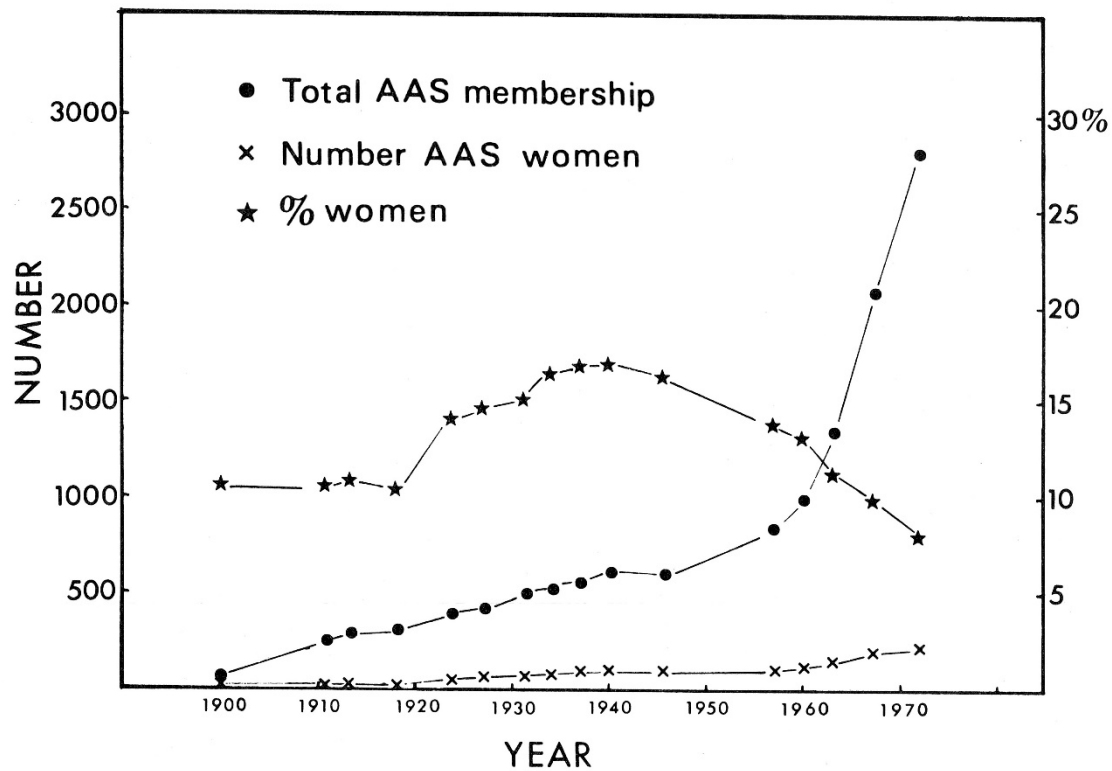
Charged to report to council within a year of formation

Members – volunteer
steering committee
Anne Cowley -- chairperson
Roberta Humphreys
Beverly Lynds
Vera Rubin

Work done in 1973, report and recommendations were unanimously accepted by Council at AAS meeting in Tucson 1973 and published in 1974

Bulletin of AAS, vol. 6, Number 3, 1974

Some sample findings based on survey of AAS members—
% women in AAS (1972) 8%



Office holders Pres 0%
 VP 3%
 Secy 0%
 Treas 14% (1 in 7)
 Councilor 7%
 Speakers 1 – 3 %

78% women in Univ., 2- 4 yr colleges

| In Academia 1972-73 | Where were the women |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Full Prof 2.4 % | Full Prof 19.4% (men 39%) |
| Assoc 5.0% | Assoc 22.6% (21.8%) |
| Assist 1.9 & | Assist 9.7% (25.1%) |
| Other 14.7% | Other 48.3% (14.1%) |

14% in Gov., Natl. Obs. or labs

Some of the recommendations

Get the report accepted, published, distributed

A roster of women members – to increase visibility (166)

For nomination for Society offices , committees,
prizes and lectureships , invited speakers , chairing
sessions, journal editors

In Employment -- encourage adoption of
affirmative action policies, repeal written and
unwritten nepotism policies, equal pay for equal
work, ----

In his cover letter, Bart Bok – “ That women are **not** asking for special consideration. They request that within the framework of our Society, they be given proper opportunity to develop and use their potential for teaching and research. “

CSWA created as standing committee in 1979

In 2005 the AAS assumed responsibility of the Award from the AAUW which could no longer support the award.

In 2005 another ad hoc committee was appointed

Alycia Weinberger (chair), Susana Deustua, Bruce Carney,
and Wallace Sargent.

The AJC award is now based on outstanding research and promise for future research by a postdoctoral woman researcher. It is given to a North American female astronomer within five years of receiving her PhD in the year designated for the award.

A personal anecdote – my Margaret Burbidge/AJC experience 2001



Margaret Burbidge's rejection of the AJC award, its consequences, the first report on the status of women in astronomy were the beginning of increased awareness by AAS of obstacles and discrimination against women.

Questions for today??

How do we view an award just for women today?
So have we come full circle? Has the increasing role and visibility of women in science changed how we view an award just for women?