

# Geraldine J. Peters

## Candidate for USNC/IAU

**Affiliation:** University of Southern California

**Position/Title:** Professor (Research) of Physics & Astronomy

**PhD institution:** University of California, Los Angeles, 1974

**Areas of scientific interest:**

- Stellar astrophysics pertaining to OB stars
- Circumstellar matter, including disks, stellar winds, jets, and other mass flows
- Interacting binary systems
- Stellar abundances
- Evolution of massive stars



**AAS and/or Division leadership positions and dates:**

- Member, Scientific Organizing Committee for a splinter meeting (“Mind the Gap – Science Drivers for UV Spectroscopy Missions in the Gap Years”) at AAS 243 in New Orleans, 2024
- Member, 40+E Organizing Committee, American Astronomical Society, 2018 – present
- Member, US National Committee of the International Astronomical Union (USNC-IAU), Category I, 2004 – 2006

**Other relevant positions, experience, and dates:**

- Member, Steering Committee, Division G: Stars and Stellar Physics, International Astronomical Union, 2015 – 2021
- Chair, Working Group on Active B Stars (WGABS), International Astronomical Union, 2006 – 2012
- Member, Organizing Committees for Symposia 240, 272, and 282, International Astronomical Union, 2004 – 2011
- Member, Senior Review Panel for Current Astrophysics Missions, NASA, 2008
- Peer Reviewer for several spacecraft missions including IUE, HST, and JWST, NASA, 1987 – present
- Reviewer, National Science Foundation and many international funding agencies, 1994 – present
- Chair, Review of Voyager UVS Guest Observer Program, NASA, 1992
- Editor in Chief, *Be Star Newsletter* (for IAU WGABS), 1987 – 2015
- Member, Board of Directors, Astronomical Society of the Pacific, 1984 – 1987

- Participant, Harlow Shapley Visiting Lectureship Program, American Astronomical Society, 1989 – 2015

**Statement:**

The International Astronomical Union is an amazing organization. From the General Assemblies (GAs) every 3 years to the various IAU symposia held yearly worldwide, it fosters advancement of knowledge in astrophysics and international collaboration. But the IAU is often viewed as a mysterious entity, and some astronomers don't apply for membership until sometime in mid-career or perhaps never. One likely reason is that there is only minimal communication on how the IAU works, its programs, prizes, and the breadth of the Commissions and Working Groups that are currently active. If I'm elected as a representative on the USNC /IAU, one of my priorities will be to help AAS members find out where and how they might contribute to the IAU mission. When I served on an earlier version of this committee in the mid-2000s, I found that a short newsletter linked through the AAS website twice a year was an effective way to convey general information and updates on Commission/Working Group activities. I'll work to revive this effort again.

I'm especially interested in inspiring young astronomers to join the IAU. When early-career astronomers ask me how they might get started contributing to IAU activities, I usually recommend joining the Working Group that is most focused on their interests. I joined what became the IAU Working Group on Active Be Stars (WGABS) in 1979, was the editor-in-chief of its newsletter from 1987-2015, chaired the WGABS from 2006-12, and served on the SOC for IAUS 272 (Active OB Stars) and co-edited its proceedings. I organized and chaired meetings of the WGABS at IAU GAs in 2003, 2006, and 2009. Recently I served two terms on the IAU Steering Committee for Division G (2015-2021) which allowed me to have input on the selection of the PhD prize and IAU Symposia.

One of my favorite events at recent IAU GAs has been the well-attended Young Astronomers Lunch (YAL). I have participated as a senior astronomer at several of them. The YAL presents an excellent opportunity to talk with senior, mid-career, and other early-career astronomers from around the world on a wide range of issues that include career development, astronomy education and outreach, and access to international databases for astronomical research.

It is an honor to have been nominated to run for a place on the USNC/IAU. If elected I will continue to encourage AAS astronomers to apply for IAU membership, become involved in international collaborations, and initiate and/or contribute to proposals for IAU Symposia. I will also communicate information about IAU activities through news items on the AAS website. In turn I will solicit input on ideas and issues that we might convey to the IAU Executive Committee to further the professional needs of the AAS membership. It would be great to see a large representation of current and future IAU members from the US in attendance at forthcoming IAU GAs and Symposia.