

F. Rick Harnden — 70's

Rick Harnden obtained his Ph.D. from Rice University in 1972. His thesis director was Bob Haymes, and his thesis focused on gamma-ray observations of the Crab Nebula and other pulsars. Upon completing graduated school he joined the X-ray astronomy group at American Science & Engineering, (AS&E) where he continued his research on pulsars and supernova remnants, and was a member of the science team which conducted the Apollo 15 and 16 Lunar X-ray Fluorescence experiments.

In 1974, Rick moved to the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics (CfA) along with most of the AS&E X-ray astronomy group, where they formed the High Energy Astrophysics Division. There he worked for many years in varying capacities on NASA's Einstein X-ray Observatory project, the first imaging X-ray astronomy mission. He continued to be active in scientific research, publishing ~ 100 refereed papers, on topics ranging from stellar coronae, pulsars, supernova remnants, and clusters of galaxies. His contributions to understanding X-ray emission from stellar coronae were especially significant.

Rick's versatility made him a valuable member of the High Energy Astrophysics Division at CfA . He became manager of the Software Development Group in the Data System Division of the Chandra X-ray Observatory Science Center and prior to that, he directed SAO's ROSAT Science Data Center (a joint German-U.S. X-ray Astronomy satellite). He also served as Deputy Associate Director of the CfA High Energy Astrophysics Division, and was a member of NASA's Astrophysics Working Group, and Chair of the Program Organizing Committee for the ADASS (Astronomical Data Analysis Software and Systems) conference series.

Rick was also actively involved in science education and outreach, serving as the Boston-area Co-Director of Project ASTRO, a collaboration between the Boston Museum of Science and the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory that is supported in part by the National Science Foundation and the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. His interest in the "big picture" led him to a position at NASA Headquarters, Washington, D.C., where he served as Program Scientist for the Fermi Gamma Ray Space Telescope in the Astrophysics Division of the Science Mission Directorate.

At last report, Rick and his wife, Virginia, are now enjoying the beauties of New Hampshire's days, and the wonders of the night skies from their lakeside cabin.