

Division of Planetary Sciences/American Astronomical Union
DPS Mailing #11-19 , Nov. 10, 2011

IN MEMORIAM: WILLIAM H. SMYTH (1941 - 2011)

William H. Smyth (1941-2011) passed away on Friday Sept. 30, 2011 after a long illness. He is survived by his wife Iris (of 43 years), three children and five grandchildren.

Bill graduated from Harvard in 1972 and after a postdoc with Michael McElroy working on Voyager observations he became an early member of AER in Lexington Ma., where he spent almost all of his career, Bill was a leader in planetary exospheres and conducted pioneering research on the exospheres of Io, Europa, Mercury, the moon, comets, and the Saturnian H cloud, especially in complex orbital environments.

His expertise on Io's neutral clouds and the plasma torus were second to none. Bill constructed the first successful model of Io's neutral clouds and studied their response to and the resulting mass loading of Jupiter's magnetosphere. This led to his serving as an IDS with the Galileo mission. Recently, Bill extended his research to the denser parts of the atmosphere and pioneered the consistent physical description of atmospheres through all degrees of collisionality. Bill was equally comfortable developing theory and analyzing observations.

His meticulous penetrating research, persistent search for the underlying truth, honesty, and integrity will be deeply missed.