



President's Message

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Dear Fellow Planetarians,

It is reasonable to assert that the future of planetariums depends upon the nurturing and training of the next generation of young, motivated planetarium professionals and space scientists. How do we identify them? How do we attract and develop these people?

This past October I attended the Great Lakes Planetarium Association (GLPA) annual conference. (Many of you may not realize this, but GLPA is the founder of the International Planetarium Society.) A thriving association, GLPA continues growing in members annually.

GLPA celebrated its golden anniversary this year, meeting once again in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the site 50 years ago where a group of planetarium professionals met to form an official association. The Grand Rapids Public Museum and the Roger B. Chaffee Planetarium were hosts again this year.

The students are coming

The good news is the growing numbers are made up of middle school, high school, university students and interns invited to investigate the planetarium field and meet planetarium professionals. These students, young and impressionable, have been taken under the trusted wings of planetarium directors dedicated to developing their students who demonstrate interest in astronomy and the planetarium.

Each night after the long day of conference events, we gathered in the hospitality suite. There I found many young brilliant students and planetarium professionals fully engaged with one another. The balance of age groups and the relationships among all were much like one would find at a family reunion, minus small children.

Young and old alike were engaged with live music, games, and interesting conversations ranging from catching up on each other's lives and discussing *The Martian*, to talking about the future of planetariums. I took to this strong family atmosphere like a duck to water. Why did I feel like I was in the middle of a real family? I was about to find out.

At the end of the conference banquet, we all moved from our dining tables into the mu-

seum's auditorium theater for speeches and awards. It was then that I discovered the secret of this thriving planetarium association, when Garry Beckstrom, GLPA president, announced the winners of the second annual Mentor Awards.

Mentor Awards at GLPA

That night, three mentors were called forward, along with all those they had mentored who were present in the audience. The first award was given to David DeBruyn, retired planetarium director of the host Chaffee Planetarium. When the mentees were called forward, they lined up across the entire stage.

Dave gazed upon them all. This normally loquacious man was so moved by the sight of so many, all he could say was, "I'm gonna cry."

That was it! The standing ovation was tumultuous. A life lived to mentor and train such great planetarium professionals and space scientists as Dan Tell, senior planetarium systems support engineer, California Academy of Sciences and GLPA secretary; Kenneth Cott, now the Roger B. Chaffee Planetarium manager; Jim Ashley, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, currently working on the 2020 Mars rover; Jacob Bourjaily, theoretical physicist at the Niels Bohr Institute in Copenhagen;

and Tom Strickwerda, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, who worked on the guidance system for the New Horizons mission.

Days later I phoned Dave to speak with him about this momentous event. In conversation he recalled those that mentored him and many of the great professionals mentored during his career. Dave stated that if he hadn't been so moved emotionally, he would have said to all those on stage, "I love every one of you and appreciate the fact that you walked through my life and, in doing so, you enriched it."

DeBruyn was nominated for this award by Dan Tell. Within his letter of recommendation he wrote,

Dave and I would work together for over eight years. In that time, he truly was a mentor. He shaped and inspired me, put trust in me, encouraged me, chastised me when necessary, and ultimately, made me into the professional I have become today. I have been privileged to at once follow in his footsteps and, through his encouragement, also strike out my own path in my career. He inspired me not only in my work as a planetarian, nor merely to become deeply involved in GLPA itself, but also to take on a mentoring role myself when presented the opportunity. Emulating my mentor, I too have had the privilege of helping to encourage and shape young lives, and hope to continue to do so for as long and with the impeccable quality of Dave DeBruyn.

Dave and I share a vocation. Our lives shaped by each other's —as has been the case with many others that have enjoyed the privilege of his mentoring. It is my hope the organization will see fit to grant this award to one of its founding fathers, and give my mentor a small, tangible token, of



From left: Alan Pareis, Mark Reed, Dayna Thomson, Jeff Bryant, Deb Lawson, Todd DeZeeuw, Joe Childers, Jean Creighton, and Ken Murphy. Dr. Ron Kaitchuck of the Charles W. Brown Planetarium in Muncie, Indiana, stands at front. Photo by Dan Goins.



From left: Garry Beckstrom, GLPA president; Dave DeBruyn, Mentor Award 2015 recipient; Ethan Brown, former Chaffee Planetarium production assistant; Dan Tell, GLPA secretary and former Chaffee Planetarium production technician, now with California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco; Emily Hromi, Chaffee Planetarium production technician; Jim Foerch, Chaffee Planetarium education specialist; Kenny Cott, Chaffee Planetarium manager; Jeff Kozarski, Chaffee Planetarium program presenter; David Staskiewicz, former Chaffee Planetarium production assistant; Dr. Jacob Bourjaily, former Chaffee Planetarium production assistant, now professor of Physics, Neils Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen, Denmark; Pat Latus, (partially hidden), Chaffee Planetarium

education specialist; Brooke Bacigal (behind Pat), Chaffee Planetarium program presenter; John Foerch, Chaffee Planetarium Production and AV Specialist; Nick Schuck, Chaffee Planetarium program presenter; Dr. Thomas Strikwerda (behind), former Chaffee Planetarium program presenter (1970's), now at Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University, where he managed the Development and Guidance Team, New Horizons to Pluto; Fred Quillin, Chaffee Planetarium program presenter; David Deremo (mostly hidden), former Chaffee Planetarium program producer (1980's); and Robert Victor, (retired) Michigan State University Abrams Planetarium, originator of the Abrams Sky Calendar. Photos by Dan Goins.

the incredible service he has done as GLPA celebrates its 50th anniversary at the planetarium where it first convened: Dave's own Chaffee Planetarium."

Honoring even more

There were two others who were given the Mentor Award that night: Dr. Ron Kaitchuck of the Charles W. Brown Planetarium at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, and Sheldon Schafer, retired planetarium curator of the Peoria Riverfront Museum, Illinois.

Among many others, Ron has mentored such notables as Dayna Thompson, assistant planetarium director at Ball State University and GLPA technology chair; Keith Turner, planetarium director at Carmel High School Planetarium in Carmel, Indiana; and Kim Small, planetarium director at Upper Dublin School District in Pennsylvania.

Sheldon Schafer was nominated for the Mentor Award by his grateful mentee and successor, Renae Kerrigan.

Last year, the Mentor Award was given to

Greg and Barbara Williams and IPS Past President Dale Smith. Greg Williams, planetarium director of the Merrillville Community School (Indiana) and his wife Barb have been working directly with 700-800 students over the past 34 years through a planetarium club Greg founded. For the past 34 years, Greg has been encouraging students in their formative years, bringing them to GLPA to experience a professional conference and to be influenced by inspiring speakers.

Dale Smith has been a mentor to so many, including Nick Anderson of the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center Planetarium (Cleveland, Ohio); Adam Leis, who has been using his computer skills for the GLPA website and will be working with Dale on the first searchable IPS directory; and Bill Buckingham, outreach manager at Kitt Peak National Observatory, Tucson, Arizona.

Mentoring is more than training how to give presentations or operate the planetarium projector. It is investing one's life in the life of another. GLPA is an association of mentors and mentees turned mentors. It's a revolving and evolving cycle of birthing and developing planetarium professionals, continuing to "be there" for one another always.

Mentoring is the source of the "strong family atmosphere" I experienced in the hospitality suite. Mentoring is an important key to developing the next great generation of planetarians.

These mentors' lives and the lives and careers of those they have mentored are too important to the entire planetarium community to simply list them briefly in this message. We can look forward to future issues of *Planetarian* featuring the mentor/mentee relationships which have paved the way and continue to forge the future of space science and planetariums worldwide.

Please share with me or Sharon Shanks, *Planetarian editor*, the stories of the mentors who have made an impact on your life.

We're making IPS greater together! ☆



Be sure to turn to page 14 and read about the site of the 2018 IPS Conference in Toulouse, France. ©Observatoire Midi-Pyrénées